

Slavery and Plantation Growth in Antebellum Florida, 1821–1860



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JULIA FLOYD SMITH

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To the Memory of Weymouth Tyree Jordan

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JULIA FLOYD SMITH

Contents

1. Slave Plantations of the New World	1
2. A New Frontier	9
3. Slave Trading	28
4. Slave Labor	53
5. "To Render Slaves Profitable"	78
6. Slavery and the Law	101
7. Slaveholders and Plantation Growth	122
8. Cotton, the Factor, and Plantation Supply	153
9. An Appraisal	171
Appendixes	195
Bibliography	229
Index	241

Slave Plantations of the New World

The plantation, defined in literature, refers to the founding or establishing of something, especially a colony in a new country, as, for example, in the New World. More specifically, the plantation refers to a place planted or land cultivated by laborers, as in the southern United States, the West Indies, and many tropical and semitropical countries. It is a relatively large agricultural unit, cultivated by free or slave labor to produce a money crop, such as coffee, cotton, rice, sugar, or tobacco, for export to a foreign market.

The New World plantation, appearing historically with the rise of world markets, resembles in some ways the Old World manor: both were, and in America still are, "relatively large landed estates based upon agricultural economics, governing numbers of people on the principle of authority." In this respect, the feudal attitudes of the manor have been reproduced on the plantation. In another respect, though, the manor differs from the plantation in that it was a self-sufficient unit producing a variety of necessary crops for local consumption; it arose "in a world which was discontinuous economically."¹

With the rise of trade and commerce and the development of

1. Edgar J. Thompson, "The Plantation as a Social System," in *Plantation Systems of the New World*, p. 29. Also see, in the same publication, Ida C. Greaves, "Plantations in World Economy," pp. 13-15; Elena Padilla, "Colonization and Development of Plantations," pp. 54-58; and Conzalo Aguirre Beltran, "African Influences in the Development of Regional Cultures in the New World," pp. 64-70.

town life in Europe, new markets and a new way of life were created, and the manor could not compete. The decline of the manor can be seen first in England where land is favored with cheap water transportation. As England expanded her domestic and foreign trade, her geographical advantages became even more important. The manorial system could not compete in this new economy; it had to adjust to another or disintegrate. Conversely, the plantation developed only when new markets arose and created a demand for staple crops. The essential difference, then, between the manor and the plantation is one of market relationships.

The New World plantation developed in areas of accessible markets: along coastal regions, inland waterways, archipelagoes, and sea islands, locations from which staples could reach foreign markets. The plantation was an instrument in the growth of trade and industrial development, and can be viewed as a frontier region in the world community. The frontier, in this sense, is an area "toward which capital and management move" and from which "products are swept into world markets." Since labor is the first requisite for the plantation system, laborers must necessarily be imported if the native population cannot successfully supply the laboring force, or if there is a labor shortage.

In America, the native Indian could not be successfully employed; thus, "armies" of Negro slaves from Africa were imported to serve as the laboring force to sustain the plantation system. To govern these "armies of laborers," a social order had to be devised to mold the "raw human material" and "to build up attitudes, work habits and skills adequate to give the plantation institutional standing." In time, the system became a customary arrangement, automatically reinforcing itself. The planter played the feature role in the evolution of this social order. His lineal roots were in the hard-driving merchant class of Europe. He was the entrepreneur who entered the business of planting to make money. In the New World he was free to import laborers and to impose new disciplines and controls. The planter could destroy a society and reduce its members to a state of slavery in order to "reconstitute human material into a social order consistent with his purpose."² The classic slave plantation of the

2. Thompson, pp. 30-33. See Stanley M. Elkins, *Slavery, a Problem in American Institutional and Intellectual Life*, pp. 81-102, for an explanation of the adjustment of the Negro's personality (through shock and detachment) as a defense for physical and psychic survival as a slave in the New World.

New World emerged from this process. Whether it was a sugar plantation in Brazil or a cotton plantation of the Old South, slave labor was the means of its growth.

The slave plantation of the Old South has been defined as "a capitalistic type of organization in which a considerable number of unfree laborers were employed under unified direction and control in the production of a staple crop."³ Whether the crop was cotton, rice, sugar, or tobacco, this general definition can be used, though there were many variations in the size and management of plantations and in the treatment of slaves. There was great variation among the members of the planter class. The planter hierarchy extended downward from the planter aristocracy through the middle-class to the small-scale planter. The elite of the slaveholding society, those few planters who were owners of hundreds of slaves, tended to be absent from their estates, vacationing in the North or traveling abroad, leaving the management of their slaves and plantations to the care of overseers.⁴

The middle-class planter resided on his plantation. He and his wife participated actively in the management of the estate, though an overseer was employed to direct the work of slaves and to punish them. The slave population on this kind of plantation was no less than thirty to forty and could be more than a hundred.⁵ The middle-class planter, at best, worked hard, and lived comfortably in a rather typical two-story house with glass windows and ample verandas. His comforts were supplemented by "a dairy, an orchard, and a well-kept garden." At worst, this planter lived carelessly and slovenly "in an enlarged log cabin, dirty and full of flies and mosquitoes; the food was a dreary monotony of bacon, corn-pone, hominy, and coffee."

The owner of a small plantation, though hardly in the planter class, deserves to be classified as one since he directed the labor of others and played the role of planter as defined here. He did not engage in field work. As his ownership of slaves increased, he would identify with wealthier planters. He cannot be called a farmer; this group, owning a few slaves in a general district of small

3. Lewis C. Gray, *History of Agriculture in the Southern United States to 1860*, 2:444.

4. *Ibid.*, 2:492, 497, 498.

5. *United States Census*, 1830-60.

farms, remained farmers, working side by side with their slaves in rather informal relationships.⁶

Contemporary writers have shown the types of pioneer planters who settled Florida and the variations in their cultural status. Achille Murat, himself a Florida planter and nephew of Napoleon Bonaparte, tells of the wealthy planters who migrated from Virginia, the Carolinas, and Georgia, seeking new lands to cultivate while being lured with "extravagant promises of land speculation." This type of pioneer was "always an aristocrat at heart in spite of his effusions on the virtues of democracy." Murat observed him migrating with his "goods and provisions in carts, his Negroes on foot, himself and his family in a wheeled carriage, or on horseback," encamping each evening along the way. Traveling was difficult since roads were poor and discontinuous. Slaves sometimes had to clear the woods or construct bridges along the way. Upon arrival in Florida, this planter's entourage continued to encamp until log houses were built: "The first thing to be done is to build huts from the trunks of trees for the Negroes and the family; this takes two or three weeks during which time they camp out. A field is soon cleared and planted; but the great difficulty is to subsist the first year. Within this almost savage habitation you will find a family as well brought up, and as intelligent, as you do in Boston or New York. . . . It has left the world for a time, and is engaged in creating a new one around it."⁷

Charles E. Whitehead tells of another kind of planter who settled Florida. Less aristocratic but also rather typical was this slaveholder who "lived in a low, badly-built, wind-cracked, fenceless, vineless, paintless mansion in the Pine Lands." He was courteous and hospitable: "He never alluded to the food he asked you to eat, and you never saw it was only pork, sweet potatoes, and corn bread." He was a tall, slim man with black mustache and "hair so long as to be confined behind his ears. His face was sallow, his lips thin and stained with tobacco. His dress was loose and extravagant in color. His manners were courtly and a little ornate." He was widowed and wealthy in land and slaves, and he had sired many of his younger Negroes. He lived a crude sort of life, enjoying few luxuries except his artful loafing and hunting.⁸

6. Gray, *History of Agriculture*, 2:498-99.

7. A. J. Hanna, *A Prince in Their Midst, the Adventurous Life of Achille Murat on the American Frontier*, p. 87.

8. *The Camp-Fires of the Everglades, or Wild Sports in the South*, p. 37.

Earlier in the chapter the plantation system of the New World was described as a frontier zone in the development of the world community. Within this zone, the plantation system of the Old South evolved during the time that new frontiers were being created from lands opened for settlement as agriculture spread south and west. From Virginia, the Carolinas, and Georgia, planters migrated with their slaves to these newer frontiers to begin again the cultivation of staple crops, among which cotton took first place. They pushed into Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, and Texas, cutting through the wilderness to clear land for cultivation. In this process of plantation settlement, slave labor was indispensable. The plantation and slavery were dependent on one another for the development of the southern frontier.

Contrary to the thesis of Frederick Jackson Turner, the southern frontier was not won for democracy. It was won for a slaveholding society by slave labor, in a manner which was ruthless because of a feverish struggle for wealth. There was a strong tradition of a sort of democracy on the southern frontier. The movement of the farmer, the overseer, or the self-made planter upward into the planter class certainly illustrates this, and the process by which the frontier was settled created a democratic atmosphere, as can be seen in the log house of the wilderness, the physical discomforts, and the lawlessness and disorder of new civilization. But Turner meant, by democracy on the frontier, equality in wealth and social status, political equality, and a consideration for the rights of man. On the southern slave-holding frontier, these qualities were lacking unless, while calling this democracy, we think only of the self-made planter rubbing elbows with the landed aristocratic planter and forget the millions of blacks, exploited and degraded in a state of human bondage.

There were variations in the size and management of plantations in the New World, and also in the treatment of slaves. Were the conditions of slaves better or worse on the plantations of the southern United States than on the plantations of Brazil and Spanish America? Two noted historians, Stanley M. Elkins and Frank Tannenbaum, have made this comparison and have agreed that the slave of Latin America, because of the influence of church and state, had advantages which were unknown to the slave of the Old South. According to Elkins, the church guaranteed certain benefits to all members baptized in its faith, and the state (Portuguese or Spanish)

reinforced this guarantee. In this "City of God," so to speak, all members, including Negro slaves, were entitled to recognition as human beings, a recognition to which slaves in the Old South were certainly not entitled.⁹

Elkins points out that the priest, as official for the church, acted as intermediary for the slave, making his regular rounds of the plantations, performing his duties, and hearing any slaves' complaints of maltreatment by their owners. Under the Spanish code, owners who mistreated slaves were subject to a fine. The church encouraged moral behavior of slaves and upheld the sanction of marriage. Slave families could not be separated. When two slaves from different plantations married, a fair value was placed upon the wife and she was purchased by the husband's owner, thus protecting the family as an institution. Though children of slaves inherited the status of the mother (as in the Old South), a slave could purchase his freedom. He could accumulate property (money) through the system of hiring himself out. Most of his wage was paid to his owner, but he was allowed to keep a small percentage for himself. In time he could, and usually did, purchase his freedom. Another advantage, according to Tannenbaum, was the frequent manumission of slaves. There was much social approval associated with manumission, and this grant of freeing the slave, or slaves, was often made at the time of a festive slave family celebration such as the birth of a slave son or the marriage of a slave daughter. It was thought to be a pious act for the owner to become "godfather for a slave child, implying the moral obligation to arrange eventually for its freedom."¹⁰ Elkins and Tannenbaum associate present differences in race relations in South America and the United States with variance in treatment of the slave in these two areas. In the southern United States, the slave was subjected to a process of dehumanization; he was at the complete mercy of the owner whose interest was purely economic; and he had none of the advantages mentioned above, except the system of hiring out on his own time.

Carl N. Degler, in a recent study of race relations in Brazil and the United States, refutes the Elkins and Tannenbaum theses of comparisons. He contends that South American slaves were victims of the same ruthless exploitation experienced by slaves in the Old South. According to Degler, "as was the case in the United States,

9. Elkins, *Slavery*, pp. 73-75.

10. *Ibid.*; Frank Tannenbaum, *Slave and Citizen*, pp. 50, 53, 54, 57, 58.

a vigorous internal slave trade broke up many families, whether the unions had been solemnized by the church or not.”¹¹ Slave families suffered disruption in other ways, as in the case of a white coffee planter who sold his mulatto child to a passing slave-trader. Brazilians were aware of this inhuman practice, as was evidenced in an address to the Senate by João Mauricio Wanderly in 1854: “It is a horror, gentlemen, to see children ripped from their mothers, husbands separated from wives, parents from children! Go to Law Street . . . and be outraged and touched by the spectacle of such sufferings. And this happens at the Court of the Empire! I am not given much to sentimentalism, but I confess that I am disturbed; it horrifies me when I consider all the consequences of this barbarous, inhuman traffic, and I will say, even more barbarous, more inhuman than the traffic from the coast of Africa.”¹²

Concerning manumission, Degler states that “despite tradition and the assertions of some historians, there was no law requiring a master to permit a slave to buy his freedom, though many undoubtedly did.” Manumission was easier to obtain and occurred more frequently than in the United States, since “Brazilian law contained none of the limitations on manumission that prevailed in the southern United States, especially after 1830.” The assertion that the slave’s right to hold property made it easier for him to obtain freedom is also challenged by Degler: “Actually, the law in Brazil did not permit slaves to possess property—or a peculium—until near the end of the slave era,” though slaves were permitted to keep property gathered (a small percentage of their wage from hiring themselves out).¹³

There were other similarities in conditions and treatment of slaves. In the Old South the slave was given religious instruction, generally presented by a Baptist, Methodist, or Presbyterian minister, depending upon the owner’s church affiliation. From the owner’s view, religion was a necessary emotional ingredient for the slave since justification of bondage was reinforced through biblical interpretation. However, the church of South America was a body which governed spiritually in a way completely separate and away

11. *Neither Black Nor White; Slavery and Race Relations in Brazil and the United States*, pp. 33–38.

12. *Ibid.*, pp. 38, 39 (as quoted in Degler).

13. *Ibid.*, pp. 39–43. This system was no different from the system of hiring in the slave states of the Old South, as evidenced in Florida. See Richard C. Wade, *Slavery in the Cities; The South, 1820–1860*.

from the influence of the slaveholder. But Degler cites many instances of the church's indifferent attitude concerning mistreatment of slaves in Brazil.¹⁴

Slaves in South America also resisted bondage, just as they did in the Old South. They frequently ran away, hoping to escape from the routine of forced labor on the plantation. "In Brazil, as in the United States," running away was "the commonest expression of slave unrest."¹⁵ The practice of freeing slaves when they became old or infirm and were no longer profitable for the owner was a Brazilian system which was not used in the United States.¹⁶ Aged and infirm slaves who were of no value to the slaveholder of the Old South and could not be sold separately in the open market were sometimes sold with groups of valuable slaves when an agreement was made that they were to be included in the purchase. Valueless slaves usually remained on the plantation and were cared for by the owner.

In summary, what can be said of the differences in treatment of the Negro slave on the plantations of the New World? First, it should be remembered that the reason for the slave's bondage was economic; the profit motive of the owner was the first consideration in any feeling he held for his bondsman. Quite naturally, he understood the importance of maintaining the slave with the minimal necessities of life to insure a profitable output of work and return on his investment. Would it not be reasonable to assume, since the system of slavery was based upon economics, that any variations in treatment of the Negro slave in North and South America were slight?

For the black, any view of slavery in the New World must necessarily be a dim one; he was exploited, degraded, and stripped of his cultural heritage while being molded into a new personality type to insure his inferior status as a slave. For the slaveholder, there was every advantage: prestige, a working force to develop a large estate to sustain a money crop, or a force to be hired out for a reasonable return, and expectancy of natural increase in his slave population to enhance the investment in slaves.

14. Degler, *Neither Black Nor White*, pp. 33-35.

15. *Ibid.*, p. 49.

16. *Ibid.*, p. 71.

A New Frontier

Slaves were introduced into Florida when the area was claimed by Spain as part of her vast colonial empire in America. As early as 1580, colonial officials had requested permission to import Negro slaves to be used as a work force in the area of St. Augustine. Several years later a small group was brought in to help reinforce the fort there and to clear the woods for planting. This importation of Negro slaves into Spanish Florida did not increase in any significant way, due to the rigid restrictions of the Spanish Crown prohibiting the use of slave labor in Florida on a scale comparable to that of the labor forces used to develop the sugar plantations of the Spanish West Indies. Thus, a labor shortage prevailed in Florida during the period of Spanish control, between 1565 and 1763. This greatly hampered the development of crop production and the colony was never self-sustaining, having to rely upon staples imported from Havana, Cuba, and abroad.

With the cession of Florida to Great Britain in 1763, at the close of the Seven Years' War, the Spanish population withdrew. Even before this war ended, wealthy planters and merchants of South Carolina had become interested in East Florida along the St. Johns River for cultivating rice and indigo. Some of them moved to the area, imported Negro slaves, and developed large plantations with the use of this labor force. During the American Revolution, many Tories from Georgia and South Carolina fled to Florida, taking their Negro slaves with them. Approximately five thousand whites

and eight thousand Negro slaves had fled to Florida by the close of the Revolution to escape the penalties of their pro-British sympathies.

Unlike the Spanish period, Florida under English colonization was relatively self-sufficient. The British government offered bounties for indigo and naval stores and these soon became the principal staples of the region. The progress of agriculture and slavery in British Florida was to be temporary. At the close of the Revolutionary War in 1783, Florida was re-ceded to Spain and most of the British inhabitants, with their slaves, left the country. Under this period of Spanish control, from 1783 to 1821, Florida relapsed into the economic stalemate of her earlier days under Spanish rule. Such were the conditions when Florida was acquired from Spain by the United States in 1821 to become a frontier development for slaveholding cotton planters from the older states of the South.

It was already known that the lands called Middle Florida, lying just below the thirty-first parallel of latitude between the Apalachicola and Suwannee rivers, and the lands bordering these rivers were extremely fertile and desirable for growing cotton. As early as 1773, the botanist William Bartram described the country as exceptionally fertile for the cultivation of cotton and other agricultural products.¹ The area is well defined geographically, as its soil type differs from that of the rest of the state. In this relatively small and isolated region, there came into being between 1821 and 1860 a cotton economy which compared favorably in output with that of the Georgia Piedmont or the Black Belt of Alabama and Mississippi.²

The rapid expansion and increase of cotton culture in Florida would not have happened without slavery. Without the use of abundant cheap labor, the process of winning new lands from a wilderness could never have been achieved. The plantation was a frontier institution and its development in Florida exemplified the manner in which settlers pushed into virgin lands to create new slaveholding societies based upon an enforced labor system. The cotton belt in Florida, when it became fully developed, extended from Jackson County, west of the Apalachicola River, into Alachua and Marion counties, southeast of the Suwannee River. The heaviest concentrations of plantations, slave populations, and cotton produc-

1. *The Travels of William Bartram*, ed. Mark Van Doren, p. 337.

2. *United States Census*, 1830-60.

tion were centered in Jackson, Gadsden, Leon, Jefferson, and Madison counties. It was only after 1840 that settlers with their slaves spilled over into Alachua and Marion counties to develop new cotton lands. In South Florida, sugar plantations, developed as early as the 1820s, had been completely destroyed during the Seminole Wars of the 1830s. After 1840, a new migration to South Florida along the Manatee River resulted in the rise of a few large sugar plantations, but sugar in Florida was in no way comparable to cotton as a money crop, and after 1850 its importance declined.³

A natural topographical division known as the Tallahassee Hills separates most of the plantation belt from the lower counties in Middle Florida, though some areas in these lower counties were fertile enough for cultivation.⁴ The Tallahassee Hills are an extension of the Upper Coastal Plains Belt that forms the Piedmont area of Virginia, the Carolinas, and Georgia, and curves through southern Alabama and central Mississippi.

The Upper Coastal Plains Belt, more commonly known as the Appalachian foothills, is characterized by gently rolling country with elevations ranging from two hundred to five hundred feet.⁵ As the Appalachian foothills extend into northern Florida to be identified as the Tallahassee Hills, their average elevation is approximately three hundred feet. They extend eastward from the

3. Ibid.; Manuscript Census Returns, 1830-60. Manatee County (in 1850, Manatee District in Hillsborough County), generally thought to be the most important sugar county, produced less than Marion County by 1860. All of the cotton counties grew sugar for molasses to supplement slave diets and all except Alachua and Jackson counties produced some sugar. Cotton production by counties in 1860 is listed below. The remaining counties produced very small amounts.

Counties	Ginned cotton (bales of 400 pounds)
Leon	16,686
Jefferson	10,847
Jackson	8,635
Madison	6,438
Gadsden	4,335
Marion	3,999
Alachua	3,714
Hamilton	1,307
Columbia	1,284

4. *United States Census*, 1830-60; C. Wythe Cooke, *Geology of Florida*, p. 81.

5. Hugh Hammond Bennett, *The Soils and Agriculture of the Southern States*, p. 61.

Apalachicola River for a length of about one hundred miles, leveling off between the Withlacoochee and Suwannee rivers. They are bounded on the north by the state of Georgia and extend southward for twenty-five or thirty miles.⁶

Geologically speaking, the Tallahassee Hills are made up almost entirely of the Hawthorn formation (Miocene series of the Tertiary System), a composition of sandy phosphatic limestone which weathers into vesicular sandstone, or sand. In Gadsden County, large deposits of Fuller's earth appear in the Hawthorn, and near the Apalachicola River the Hawthorn has been completely covered by Pleistocene marine terrace deposits.⁷ Generally speaking, outcropping from the Hawthorn, a reddish and grayish claylike earth, can be seen easily where any weathering or erosion has cut away the topsoil.

The topsoil itself has a grayish and sometimes brownish or reddish color, resulting from its composition of lime and marl, two natural fertilizers which contribute to its richness.⁸ Solon Robinson, who traveled in Florida as correspondent for *The American Agriculturist* in 1850, described it as being "a dark-red color, composed of sand, clay, lime, and iron, and having an unctuous feel as though it contained fatty matter." Robinson thought it was "the finest red land in America" and that "the advantages of locating a cotton plantation in the area were probably greater than in any other state east of the Mississippi."⁹

The Tallahassee Hills form a natural drainage system in Middle Florida, and numerous fresh water lakes enhance the beauty of the hill area. Most of the lakes are shallow and were formed by the collection of water in sink holes, or "lime sinks." Lake Iamonia, Lake Jackson, Lake Lafayette, and many others were formed in this way.¹⁰ At times the lakes drain almost completely dry, the water going underground through passages formed by the disintegrated lime rock. The lakes fill again when dead plant life, or soil material, clogs the underground passages. In the same manner, rivers and streams disappear when the water breaks through soft limestone

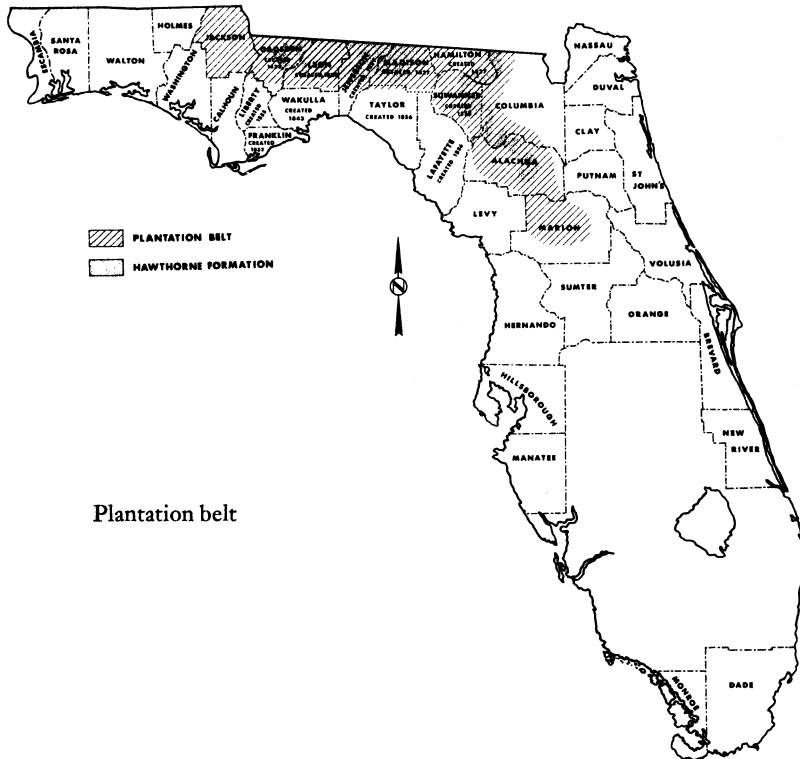
6. C. Wythe Cooke, *Scenery of Florida*, p. 15; Herman Gunter, *Elevations in Florida*, pp. 369, 393, 513, 549, 600.

7. Cooke, *Geology of Florida*, pp. 144-57; Unpublished Census Returns (Social Statistics), 1850, 1860.

8. Cooke, *Scenery of Florida*, p. 16.

9. *The American Agriculturist* 10 (1851):148.

10. Cooke, *Geology of Florida*, p. 155.



Plantation belt

beds to flow in subterranean channels, reappearing sometimes miles away.¹¹

The lakes and streams are strongly impregnated with lime and their water is not desirable for drinking. By digging deep wells, settlers soon discovered that pure, clear, "free stone" water could be reached beneath the surface and an abundant supply was easily obtained. At White Springs, a sulphur spring breaks out of the Suwannee River. Early settlers thought the sulphur water contained valuable medical properties and came from miles around to drink and bathe in the water. White Springs became a resort area during the antebellum era and also an important commercial center where merchants catered to planters east and west of the Suwannee River.¹²

The rivers in Middle Florida make up in Georgia and empty into the Gulf of Mexico, forming a natural highway along which some of the early migrants traveled to enter the territory. Fertile lands bordering the Suwannee and its tributaries, the Alapaha and Withlacoochee, were quickly settled because of their richness and adaptability to cotton.¹³ The Aucilla River, dividing Madison and Jefferson counties, and the Ochlockonee River, dividing Leon and Gadsden counties, also facilitated entry to good lands. The Apalachicola River, dividing Gadsden and Jackson counties, became one of the important commercial highways of the South during the antebellum period. It was navigable throughout its length and steamboats plied its waters, continuing on up the Chattahoochee and the Flint, from where these two rivers converge to form the Apalachicola. Steamboats carried supplies to the plantations and took the planters' cotton back to the port of Apalachicola to be shipped to market.¹⁴

Steamboats also plied the Suwannee River, which was navigable from the Gulf of Mexico as far north as Livingston's Landing, about fifteen miles below White Springs. The town of Livingston in Madison County was promoted by Reddin W. Parramore, land speculator and planter, who made a fortune in Madison County during the 1840s and 1850s. Parramore described Livingston as being "the head of Steam Boat navigation directly on the route

11. Bennett, *Soils and Agriculture*, pp. 61, 62.

12. Unpublished Census Returns (Social Statistics), 1850, 1860.

13. Edward J. Coale, *Original Memoir on the Floridas, By a Gentleman of the South*, p. 13; Deed Records, Gadsden, Leon, Jefferson, Madison, and Hamilton counties.

14. Tallahassee *Florida Sentinel*, November 9, 1852.

connecting the Eastern and Western sections of the Territory” and as being “the nearest point to all the rich cotton growing lands” along the Suwannee.¹⁵

Hammocks, savannas, and pine flats characterize Middle Florida. The lands most sought after by planters were high hammock lands. When these were cleared and cultivated, they produced excellent crops. Usually a heavy growth of trees, such as magnolias, oaks, and laurels, was to be found on high hammock lands. Low hammocks, though less desirable for cotton unless properly drained, were preferred for planting sugarcane.¹⁶ The savannas, the treeless, flat, open regions near streams, when properly drained and ditched, were exceptionally good for growing cane because of their rich alluvium deposits. The marsh savannas bordering tidal streams, when properly reclaimed, were ideal for growing rice. The pine flats, thought to be less desirable, were preferred by many small-scale farmers who claimed they were comparable to fertile high hammock when “trodden by cattle.” A fine quality of Sea Island cotton was grown on both sides of the Suwannee River in Hamilton, Columbia, and Suwannee counties on “first class pine lands.”¹⁷

The climate throughout Middle Florida was well suited for the cultivation of cotton and other crops. The winters were relatively mild and extremely low temperatures lasted only a few days at a time.¹⁸ Damaging frosts seldom appeared before December and the last of February usually marked their end. By April, generally, spring planting could be safely done. A short period between frosts and a long planting season were especially desirable for growing cotton since the plant continues to boll until the first damaging

15. A petition made by the owners of the steamboat *Glasgow*, 1847, manuscript, Secretary of State's Office, Tallahassee. (This manuscript, and others used throughout the study, are located in the sub-basement vault at the Capitol Building in Tallahassee. They constitute a miscellaneous collection of letters of correspondence to and from the governors, petitions or memorials to the Legislative Assembly and the governors, statistical information for tax purposes, official orders given by the governors, and other interesting material. Citations used to identify these manuscripts will read: ms., Secretary of State's Office, Tallahassee.)

16. J. D. B. De Bow, *The Industrial Resources of the Southern and Western States*, 1:335; De Bow, *Compendium of the Seventh Census*, p. 210; *Agriculture of the United States in 1860, Compiled from the Original Returns of the Eighth Census*, pp. 18-21.

17. De Bow, *Industrial Resources*, 1:336; Jerrell H. Shofner and William Warren Rogers, “Sea Island Cotton in Ante-Bellum Florida.”

18. Rupert B. Vance, *Human Geography of the South*, p. 360.

frost kills it. Even then, cotton remained in the field through December and January and late pickings were not unusual. The planting season throughout Middle Florida lasted approximately 260 days, or a little more than eight months out of the year.¹⁹

The distribution of rainfall throughout Middle Florida was fairly uniform, though occasionally droughts during spring and autumn caused great damage to crops. One such drought during the fall of 1850 destroyed much of the corn.²⁰ Excessive rain was often as damaging as a severe drought, saturating fields and causing plants to rot. The clayish consistency of the subsoil had a tendency to hold moisture, helping the topsoil to store it. This condition, so desirable for cultivation during normally rainy seasons, was devastating to crops when excessive amounts of rain fell and water settled in fields not properly ditched for draining.²¹

A richly fertile soil, an adequate amount of rainfall, and an ideal climate attracted settlers and contributed to the growth of cotton culture and slavery in Florida. A migrant from South Carolina stated that, regardless of "all the multifarious difficulties of providing a home in the woods, and clearing the land for cultivation," he succeeded the third year "in raising crops for the market that netted him \$388 to the hand, besides providing abundantly for the sustenance of the plantation."²² Benjamin F. Whitner, a prominent Gadsden County planter, eulogized the advantages of settling in Florida: "The climate is ideal, the soil easily cultivated in all seasons, making fair returns for labor. The slave population is lightly worked, easily provided for, contented and happy, as manifested by the long lives, health and rapid increase of their children."²³ Equally important were the convenient markets for exporting cotton.

Spanish control of East Florida before 1821 and the menace of the Seminole Indians constituted barriers that discouraged early white settlement in places other than around St. Augustine and Pensacola. The white population of the whole territory in 1821 was approximately twenty thousand, most of it centered around these two

19. *Climatic Summary of the United States*, Section 104, Northern Florida, p. 1.

20. *Tallahassee Florida Sentinel*, January 14, 1851.

21. *Climatic Summary*, p. 3; conversation with Edwin H. Finlayson, Ashville, Florida.

22. *Tallahassee Florida Sentinel*, February 5, 1850.

23. *Ibid.*, March 8, 1853.

towns.²⁴ In 1824, the second Legislative Council met and designated Tallahassee as the territorial capital; it was chosen because of its location, approximately midway between St. Augustine and Pensacola.²⁵ While public land was being surveyed, an official for the new territory declared, "the soil and climate combines and possesses superior advantages and is well adapted to the cultivation both of the short and long staple cotton." He also reported that planters already in the area were being "as amply rewarded as the planters of the adjoining states."²⁶ The promise of new fertile lands to cultivate and of profits to be gained from cotton caused a rush of settlement from the older states of the South.

Planters came from Georgia, the Carolinas, and Virginia, with their families and slaves, leaving their depleted cotton and tobacco fields in quest of these virgin lands. Travel was slow and difficult; roads at their best were rough and in many places little more than trails. There were few bridges and ferries to take wagons across rivers and streams. A planter from the Georgia Piedmont who took his family and slaves to Florida gave the following description of his journey:

As a word of caution to all who wish to emigrate to new countries of great promise, 'Jordan is a hard road to travel.' Imagine yourself loaded up; wagons, teams, plunder all in, wife, children, negroes, all saying good-bye to old friends—one last look at the comfortable mansion, the neat negro quarters, the spacious stables, barns, gin house, smoke-house. You can't stand the upbraidings of the red hill sides, but it won't pay to renovate them. Travel on.

A river crosses your track and the swamps for miles around are swollen—there is no suspension bridge. A crazy flat that has lain half sunken through the summer, with an unskilled ferryman, is your only chance. Wagon and Team No. 1 drives in. The river is not more than fifty or sixty yards wide, but how the

24. Coale, *Original Memoir*, p. 12; Dorothy Dodd and W. T. Cash, *Florida Becomes a State*, p. 36. Dodd and Cash estimate the population to have been five thousand in 1821. In Coale's *Original Memoir*, the population is said to have been fifteen thousand in East Florida and five thousand in West Florida. When the first census was taken in 1830, the population was 34,730. The figure twenty thousand (excluding Indians) is more nearly correct.

25. Dodd and Cash, *Florida Becomes a State*, p. 35.

26. A report on the agricultural advantages of Florida, 1825, ms., Secretary of State's Office, Tallahassee.

torrent sweeps by you. Up the stream you tug by the limbs of the trees with hook and jam, until the ferryman is satisfied he can land at the right point on the other side. Wife and children bring up the rear with fear and trembling and the most sincere prayers ever felt are uttered.²⁷

The French writer Francis de Castelnau observed while traveling through Florida in 1837, "When a planter settles in the midst of the woods with his slaves, he begins by cutting down a few trees and builds for himself a kind of cottage called *Log-House*, then after fencing in a field he has most of the trees cut down at about two feet from the ground."²⁸ As was normal in any frontier development, much lawlessness and disorder prevailed in Florida during this early period. According to Castelnau, intemperance was the most common of all the vices: "It often happens that men of responsible position are found rolling drunk in the streets until their slaves come to look for them and carry them home in their arms." The habit of gambling was also common. Castelnau attributed the frequent murders he observed to gambling. He reported many scenes of violence: "I have seen two hostile planters meet on horseback in the street and immediately start fighting with pistol and bowie knife, a fight in which their friends and their slaves took part."²⁹

Amidst this apparent disorder, the movement of settlers and slaves from the older states to the fertile lands of Florida reached substantial proportions during the territorial period. Flourishing plantations were soon developed out of a wilderness, and slavery was the means by which this growth was accomplished. A transplanted Piedmont and Tidewater society had come into being, making the interests and habits of these pioneers similar in most ways to the cultures of the older cotton states.

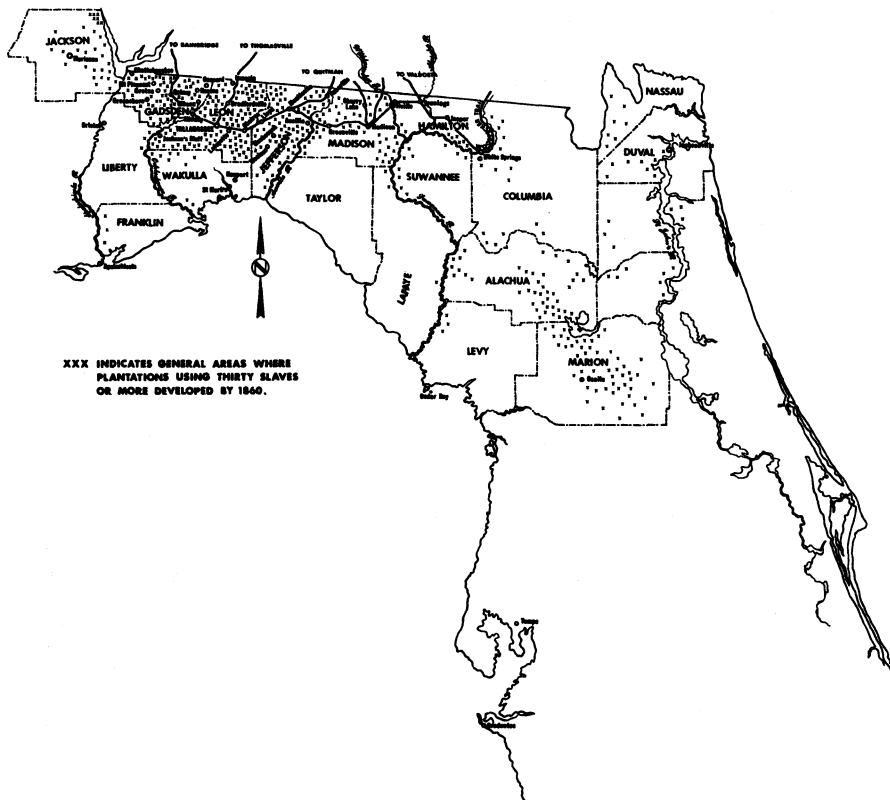
These migrants entered Florida by several ways. The Woodpecker Trail (formerly an Indian trail), which followed the direction of the Suwannee River from Georgia into Florida as far south as White Springs, was used to enter Hamilton and Madison counties.³⁰ The Alapaha River, flowing south through Hamilton County,

27. *The Southern Cultivator* 14 (1856):371.

28. "Essay on Middle Florida, 1837, 1838," p. 225.

29. *Ibid.*, p. 236.

30. Olin Norwood Collection, Jasper, Florida; conversation with Foster Barnes, Curator, Stephen Foster Memorial, White Springs, Florida.



Areas of settlement

was also a means of entry. Daniel Bell, the first settler to enter Hamilton County, floated down the Alapaha from Georgia on a raft as far as the present site of Jennings.³¹ Others chose a more circuitous route, traveling with their families and slaves by boat from the Atlantic ports, entering from the Gulf of Mexico through St. Marks.

In southwest Georgia, the old Coffee Road, completed about 1824, wound through several counties in lower Georgia near the boundary line of Florida. Before long, roads were constructed leading north from Monticello, Tallahassee, and Quincy to connect with the Coffee Road at Quitman, Thomasville, and Bainbridge, Georgia. As settlement increased, stage and mail routes were established. By the year 1845, when Florida entered the Union, several stage lines were carrying mail and passengers to and from various cities in Alabama and Georgia.³² Travel at best was inconvenient and hazardous. Solon Robinson described his journey from Macon, Georgia, to Tallahassee in 1851: "I left Macon in the mail stage for Tallahassee, 220 miles; fare \$22; time, 60 hours; roads to be imagined, taverns unimaginable; coaches, horses, and drivers to match; and taken altogether, not to be matched anywhere else upon this earth." ³³

St. Marks was a seaport for all of Middle Florida and lower Georgia during this early period. Ellen Call Long, on her way to Tallahassee, described the port about 1830 as "a quaint little village, amphibious-like, consisting of a few dwelling houses, stores, etc., mostly built on stilts or piles, as if ready to launch when wind or tide prevailed." ³⁴ Before 1835, cotton and other products were taken to St. Marks by wagon. Small boats carried the merchandise to and from the ships anchored out from shore.³⁵ Cotton, tobacco, hides, syrup, brown sugar, molasses, and other products were shipped out in exchange for flour, coffee, gunpowder, bolts of homespun, quinine, calomel, castor oil, and other necessary items.³⁶

31. Conversation with Mrs. Alice Bell, descendent of Daniel Bell, White Springs; conversation with Mrs. Maude Havaner, Jennings, Florida; Deed Records, Hamilton County.

32. William W. Rogers, *Ante-Bellum Thomas County, 1825-1861*, p. 43; Tallahassee *Floridian and Journal*, August 1, 1857.

33. *The American Agriculturist* 10 (1851):439.

34. *Florida Breezes; or, Florida, New and Old*, p. 35.

35. A legal letter showing a suit filed by James C. Johnson against the brig *Clarion*, dated 1843, Leon County.

36. W. T. Cash, "Newport as a Business Center," p. 25.

Planters and businessmen soon realized that they would have to develop a more practical means of transporting their cotton to St. Marks. The solution was the Tallahassee Railroad Company, formed by such prominent persons as Richard K. Call, Green Chaires, Benjamin Chaires, Sam Reid, Leigh Reid, Samuel Duval, John Shepard, Samuel Parkhill, and John Parkhill. After having obtained a charter from the Legislative Council of Florida, 119 stockholders petitioned Congress in 1834 for permission to construct the railroad.³⁷ Two years later the Tallahassee Railroad was built, and for a number of years loads of cotton were taken regularly on the 21-mile line from Tallahassee to St. Marks by a horse-drawn train. By 1856, a steam-powered train was making daily trips to and from St. Marks, averaging two hours each way, including time to stop and refuel with wood and water to maintain sufficient steam.³⁸ Only two other railroads were operating in Florida during the antebellum period: the Pensacola and Georgia Railroad, connecting Quincy with Jacksonville, and the Florida Railroad, connecting Fernandina with Cedar Key, both completed in 1860.³⁹

In 1824, construction began on the first federal highway in Florida, between Pensacola and St. Augustine. After a military detachment built the road as far east from Pensacola as the Ochlockonee River, John Bellamy, Jefferson County planter, received a contract from the Territorial Government to complete it. Bellamy used slave labor to build the road, completing it in 1826 at a cost of \$23,000.⁴⁰ A clause in the contract between Bellamy and the Territorial Government stipulated that there would be no stumps left standing higher than twelve inches. The road was twenty-five feet

37. "Memorial of the Tallahassee Railroad Company," *Senate Documents*, 23d Cong., 2d sess., vol. 2 (1834-35), doc. 267, no. 38, p. 1.

38. Message from Governor Madison S. Perry to the Legislative Assembly, dated December 3, 1859, ms., Secretary of State's Office, Tallahassee; Tallahassee *Floridian and Journal*, October 11, 1856.

39. Miscellaneous letters of correspondence and reports, dated 1850-60, mss., Secretary of State's Office, Tallahassee; Ulrich Bonnell Phillips, *A History of Transportation in the Eastern Cotton Belt*, p. 360. Phillips states that Florida was "thinly settled, poverty-stricken, unproductive, and devoid of promising seaports or other trade centers" during this period. He was not cognizant of the significance of cotton production and slavery in Florida.

40. Caroline Mays Brevard, *A History of Florida from the Treaty of 1763 to Our Own Times*, 1:105; Deed Records, Jefferson County; Mary Oakley McRory and Edith Clarke Barrows, *History of Jefferson County, Florida*, p. 104.

wide and had a hard surface of sand and clay.⁴¹ It became a highway used by Florida planters to haul their cotton to market.

It was not unusual for persons to receive land from the Territorial Government as compensation for road construction work and other internal improvements, such as dredging streams to make them more navigable. Bellamy received such compensation in a grant of three thousand acres east of Monticello along the Aucilla River. This was some of the richest land in the plantation belt, and Bellamy made a fortune cultivating Sea Island and short staple cotton on it.⁴²

The desire for good, cheap land was a basic factor prompting settlers to migrate to Florida. Federal land policy encouraged emigration. Shortly after the Territorial Government was formed, Congress granted the right of pre-emption to Florida settlers. Pre-emptors were required to notify the land office, three weeks prior to land sales, of their intention to purchase land on which they had already settled. A large number of the pioneer settlers in Florida, many of whom remained small-scale farmers, were pre-emptors who confirmed their "squatter" rights by purchasing eighty acres of land at \$1.25 per acre.⁴³

The Indian menace, though troublesome, appeared not to deter settlers planning to "take up" land in Florida. A memorial sent to President John Quincy Adams in 1826 by the Legislative Council was a request made on behalf of pre-emptors who hoped to have the President delay forthcoming land sales. At the time the pre-emptors, "having been called from their homes and compelled to take up arms," were protecting frontier settlements threatened by Seminoles and could not use their pre-emption rights.⁴⁴

The mania for buying land in Florida is confirmed by a statement of sales of public lands published by the Treasury Department of the United States. In 1828, the Tallahassee Land Office sold 140,587 acres, with receipts from purchases amounting to \$189,182. In other frontier developments, land sales were not so large: Fort Wayne sold 2,212 acres, Lexington 35,380, Crawfordsville (Indiana)

41. Carlton Smith Collection, in possession of Mrs. Carlton Smith, Madison, Florida.

42. *Inventory and Appraisal of the Estate Belonging to William Bellamy*, Book A, pp. 15-18, Jefferson County.

43. A memorial sent to President John Quincy Adams from the Legislative Council of the Territory of Florida, 1826, ms., Secretary of State's Office, Tallahassee.

44. *Ibid.*

113,341, and Detroit 34,805.⁴⁵ By 1835, nearly all of the desirable land in Middle Florida had been purchased by speculators, much of it in large units of acreage which they held and then sold for ten dollars an acre.⁴⁶

Farquhar Macrae, writing from his Wascissa Plantation in Jefferson County in 1835, stated that "good lands are mostly all entered; 'tho large tracts are still held by individuals in the market, at rates cheaper than any other land of similar quality in the Southern country." Macrae also wrote that land could be bought for about ten dollars an acre whereas similar land in Alabama was not available for less than twenty-five.⁴⁷

In most instances, frontier areas followed a policy of selling land received from the federal government rather than reserving large amounts for schools or other internal improvements, as older settled regions were prone to do.⁴⁸ Deed records show that during the early period of settlement, when Florida was still a territory, school lands were released from time to time for public sale. In addition to these lands, four townships were granted by Congress after Florida became a state and were designated as seminary lands. The money received by the state from the sale of school and seminary lands was reserved in an educational fund. In addition, 5 per cent of the net receipts from the sales of all public land in Florida was placed in the same fund.⁴⁹

Grants were also issued to private individuals and were sold by them. The largest and perhaps the earliest one of these was the General Lafayette grant of 23,040 acres issued by the government in 1825. Of the several small grants issued a few years later, one was 80 acres issued by President Andrew Jackson in 1833 to Jack Holland. In 1838, President Martin Van Buren made two similar grants, one of 340 acres to Adam Gramling and the other of 80 acres to Noah McElvey; the latter also received an additional 60 acres in 1844 from President John Tyler.⁵⁰

45. *Reports of the Secretary of the Treasury of the United States, 1815-28*, 2:633.

46. Gray, *History of Agriculture*, 2:633.

47. *The Farmers' Register* 3 (1835):516.

48. Gray, *History of Agriculture*, 2:635.

49. A letter to Robert J. Walker, Secretary of the Treasury, from Governor William D. Moseley, October 27, 1845, ms., Secretary of State's Office, Tallahassee; *Tallahassee Florida Sentinel*, November 16, 1852.

50. These grants, dated 1833-44, were found among manuscripts in the Leon County Courthouse. They were later presented to the Florida State Library.

An interesting letter from General Lafayette to Governor William P. Duval, dated 1827, tells of the general's plan to place one hundred white laborers on three thousand acres of his land grant. Lafayette had visions of establishing vineyards, olive groves, and mulberry groves for silk culture on his Florida lands. One of Lafayette's close friends in America, "Mr. Skinner of Baltimore," acted as adviser and attorney for the venture. The white laborers were transported from Europe to St. Marks and taken to Lafayette's plantation east of Tallahassee where he hoped to prove that free white labor could be more profitably worked than slave labor. These laborers were peasants from Normandy, ill suited "for the task of transforming forests into cultivated areas and unable to adjust to the conditions of a warm climate." The venture was a failure and Lafayette's hopes were unfulfilled.⁵¹

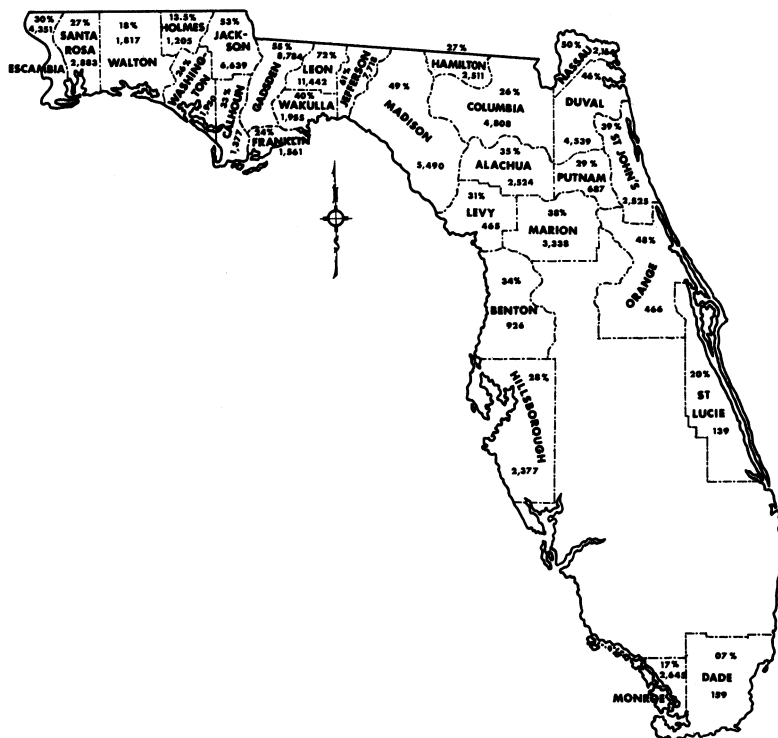
The purchase of the Lafayette Grant in 1833 by the firm of Nuttall, Braden, and Craig provides an excellent illustration of land speculation processes. The grant encompassed almost a complete township lying directly east of the new capital. The purchase price was \$46,520 and the firm anticipated a profit of \$60,000. Though the land was sold, most of the returns were promissory notes maturing ten and twenty years from date of issue. The indenture for this transaction stipulated that the money was to be paid in full before January 1, 1844.⁵²

In 1844, the Lafayette heirs appointed Robert W. Williams of Leon County as attorney for their estate to collect the money due them. Williams was given authority to stop all payments to Braden, Craig, and Company (Nuttall had died in 1836) from those persons who purchased acreage within the township, until the Lafayette heirs were reimbursed.⁵³ As late as the 1850s, probate records show that Williams was still trying unsuccessfully to collect money for his clients. It appears that even though there were numerous La-

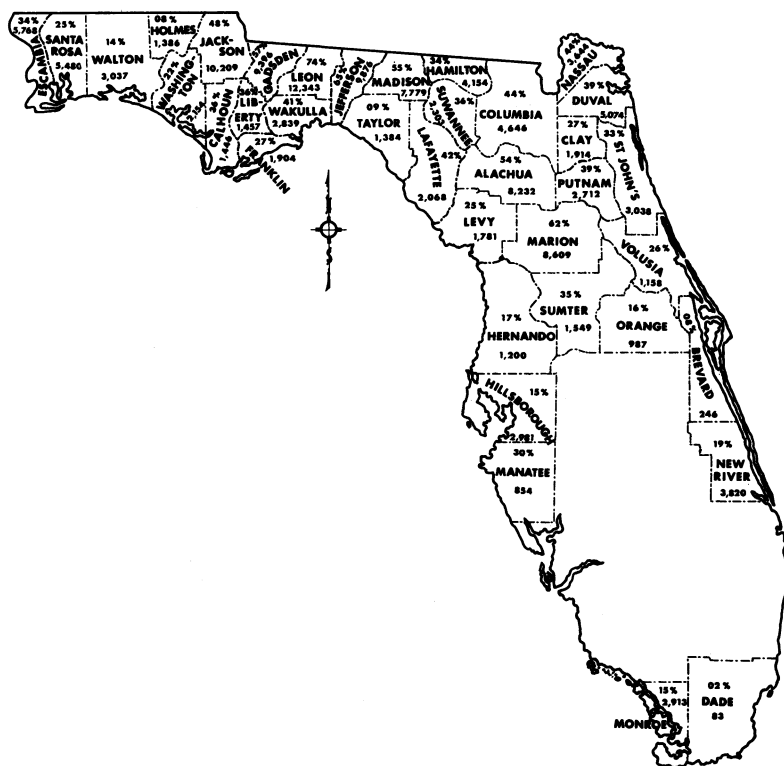
51. A letter of correspondence to Governor William P. Duval from Marquis de Lafayette, dated June 6, 1831, ms., Secretary of State's Office, Tallahassee (it is thought that Lafayette's friend Mr. Skinner was John L. Skinner, editor of *The American Farmer*, first published in 1819); Herbert J. Doherty, *Richard Keith Call, Southern Unionist*, pp. 84, 85; Hanna, *A Prince in Their Midst*, pp. 108-9.

52. Deed Records, Book K, p. 74, and Book I, p. 143, Leon County; Nuttall Papers, Carlton Smith Collection.

53. Deed Records, Leon County, Book I, pp. 146-47; Ulrich B. Phillips and James D. Glunt, eds., *Florida Plantation Records from the Papers of George Noble Jones*.



Percentage of slaves to total population by counties, 1850



fayette heirs, none received any real profit from the general's grant.⁵⁴

The land boom during the years preceding the crisis of 1837 resulted from easy federal policies of sale as well as from general economic and credit conditions which fostered unlimited speculation. A contemporary traveler in the United States declared, "The great article of trade and speculation has been land. Scarcely do you meet with a man in the country who has not more or less to dispose of. Immense fortunes have been acquired by individuals from purchasing large tracts and retailing them in small portions; and long credit being given, numbers have been tempted to speculate."⁵⁵

A steady stream of settlers moving into Florida increased the population from 34,730 in 1830 to 54,447 by 1840. A decade later it had reached 87,445; almost half were Negro slaves. Only Texas had a faster rate of increase in population. By 1860, Florida's population was 140,500, and 61,750 of the total were Negro slaves. The cotton belt was the most densely populated section of the state, and Negro slaves in this area far outnumbered whites.⁵⁶

Census returns list almost a thousand cotton plantations in Florida in 1850. It should be remembered that most of these were small. Only 200 plantations were large enough to use 30 slaves or more, and some of these used more than 100. A few used more than 200. By 1850, approximately 1.5 million acres of land had been sold to individuals in Florida. Land and slaves were valued at \$30 million. By 1860, land sales had doubled and the value of land had tripled. No figures are given for 1860 to show the value of slaves, but an estimate would place their value at approximately \$62 million, since Negroes were selling for \$1,000 each by 1860, young and old, aged and infirm. Also by 1860, there were more than 400 plantations using 30 or more slaves.⁵⁷

54. The Leon County Tax Rolls for 1845-60 list Robert W. Williams as agent for the Lafayette heirs. In 1850, the heirs were listed as owning 196 slaves and several thousand acres of land. Williams must have realized some profit as attorney for the estate. This evidence is contrary to A. J. Hanna's report. Hanna states that the Lafayette heirs disposed of all the property for more than \$100,000 (*A Prince in Their Midst*, p. 109).

55. Quoted in Gray, *History of Agriculture*, 1:639.

56. *United States Census*, 1830-60; Tallahassee *Florida Sentinel*, April 15, 1851.

57. De Bow, *Compendium of the Seventh Census*, p. 206; Inventories and Appraisements of Estates, Probate Records, Gadsden, Leon, Jefferson, Madison, and Hamilton counties; County tax rolls; Unpublished Census Returns, 1860.

Slave Trading

Oh, Heaven! and is there no relief
This side the silent grave
To soothe the pain, to quell the grief
And anguish of a slave? ¹

A contemporary writer described the slave-trader as a "coarse, ill-bred person, provincial in speech and manners, with a cross-looking phiz, a whiskey-tinctured nose, cold hard-looking eyes, a dirty tobacco-stained mouth, and shabby dress." The trader's insensitivity made him suffer no qualms, "for although he habitually separates parent from child, brother from sister, and husband from wife, he is yet one of the jolliest dogs alive, and never evinces the least sign of remorse. . . . So soon as he has completed his 'gang' he dresses them up in good clothes, makes them comb their kinky heads into some appearance of neatness, rubs oil on their dusky faces to give them a sleek healthy color, gives them a dram occasionally to make them sprightly, and teaches each one the part he or she has to play; and then he sets out for the extreme South. . . ." ²

Much of the slave trade in Florida centered in Tallahassee since this capital city was in the heart of the cotton belt. New Orleans was perhaps the largest slave market in the South. ³ "Negro-traders," characters looked down upon by all, purchased slaves there "from the block" at public outcry, then proceeded with them to various

1. George Moses Horton, "On Liberty and Slavery," in *Cavalcade, Negro American Writing from 1760 to the Present*, eds. Arthur P. Davis and Saunders Redding, p. 37.

2. D. R. Hundley, *Social Relations in Our Southern States*, pp. 139-42.

3. Frederic Bancroft, *Slave Trading in the Old South*, p. 315. According to Bancroft, New Orleans was a larger market than Richmond and Charleston combined.

areas for resale. A large part of the supply for Florida planters was brought in by these traders. They came to St. Marks by ship, then went on to Tallahassee to dispose of their cargoes. Slaves were kept in the public jail or in "slave pens" until time of sale. The latter were buildings especially designed with cells. The sale of Negroes had been widely advertised in advance, and, as they were presented at auction, bidding was usually spirited.⁴

The mania for buying slaves which seized Florida planters is evidenced by the fact that the Negro population increased from 7,587 in 1830 to 26,526 in 1840, a growth rate far in excess of the normal increase. This rapid growth continued during the 1840s, though it was not as pronounced. By 1850, there were 39,310 Negro slaves in the state, and 61,750 by 1860,⁵ nearly half of the state's total population of 140,500. The slave population was concentrated in the cotton belt.

To supply the increased demand of Florida planters, Negroes were purchased from slave markets in Virginia, Maryland, and Georgia in addition to New Orleans. A bill of sale for the purchase of two Negroes by John Finlayson in 1838 at Annapolis, Maryland, shows that he paid \$600 for a Negro woman, Dinah, and her child, with a guarantee that "bouth [*sic*] were sound in body and mind and a slave for life." At another time, Finlayson paid \$1,100 for a blacksmith and \$1,150 for "Fanny, a woman about 24, and her son Francis, about 5." Negroes were purchased separately and in groups. In 1850, Finlayson purchased a group of nineteen Negroes in Richmond, Virginia. His slaves were forwarded by ship from Annapolis and Richmond to Darien, Georgia, then brought to his Jefferson County plantation by wagon.⁶

Slaves exported from the upper South were usually "driven" in coffles. An Englishman, traveling through the slave states in 1834, described such a coffle of Negroes in Virginia being taken to the Mississippi River for shipment to Natchez and New Orleans. He saw "two hundred male slaves manacled and chained together in

4. Susan Bradford Eppes, *The Negro of the Old South*, p. 53.

5. *Fifth Census or Enumeration of the Inhabitants of the United States*, p. 157; *Sixth Census or Enumeration of the Inhabitants of the United States*, p. 456; De Bow, *Compendium of the Seventh Census*, p. 206; *Agriculture of the United States in 1860*, pp. 225, 247. The rise in slave population can be attributed, in part, to natural increase.

6. Manuscripts in possession of Edwin H. Finlayson, Ashville, Florida. John Finlayson also purchased Negroes from the slave market at Louisville, Georgia.

pairs." Near them were several slave drivers, "laughing and smoking, fairly well dressed, wearing broad-brimmed white hats. . . ." There was also a train of wagons on a journey such as this. When Negro women and children became exhausted walking, they were allowed to ride.⁷ The slave coffle was led by one or two musicians who played violins. These slave "fiddlers" played lively tunes designed to create a feeling of happiness or good humor among the slaves.

Another English traveler described a drove of Negro slaves being taken south from Virginia in 1839. The men were chained together in pairs, and the women and children were carrying bundles. There were several slave drivers on horseback with large whips.⁸ Such scenes as these were not unusual in this spectacular transportation of Negro slaves into the regions of the lower South. Approximately fifty thousand slaves were taken into Florida and Texas between 1850 and 1860, though not all these were transported by traders. Owners who migrated took their slaves along.⁹

The demand for Negroes to leave the older states of the South in order to supply the newer plantation belts was a normal development since, under constitutional provision, African slave trade was abolished in 1808. With this supply cut off, domestic trade increased rapidly. A striking aspect of the domestic trade was the dramatic shift in slave population to regions of the lower South and Southwest as the demand for Negroes increased in these areas. In this shift, the states of the upper South became selling states and Virginia ranked first among them. Between 1830 and 1860, Virginia exported approximately 300,000 Negro slaves.¹⁰ Virginia planters had so impoverished their soil that they no longer received profitable returns from their tobacco (except their best, the "Virginia leaf"), and many now came to depend upon the sale of their "surplus negroes" to "maintain a semblance of their former hospitality."¹¹

Records of the Virginia Legislature of 1831 and 1832 refer to "surplus Negroes" or "slave-breeding" as a profitable enterprise for

7. George W. Featherstonhaugh, *Excursion Through the Slave States from Washington on the Potomac to the Frontier of Mexico, 1834-1835*, 1:46.

8. James S. Buckingham, *The Slave States of America*, 2:553.

9. Bancroft, *Slave Trading*, p. 405.

10. Gray, *History of Agriculture*, 2:651.

11. Bancroft, *Slave Trading*, p. 69, quoted in Bancroft; Gray, *History of Agriculture*, 2:661-63.

the state. Thomas R. Dew, president of William and Mary College, who was noted for his pro-slavery writings, referred to Virginia as "a negro raising state for other states. She produces enough for her own supply and six thousand for sale" annually to other states.¹² Anti-slavery writers frequently commented upon the system of rearing slaves for market as a source of income in Virginia and other border states of the South. This desire for profit from increase in birth rates also motivated slaveholders in the lower South. One Florida resident declared, "The climate is peculiarly adapted and fitted to the constitution of the negro. It is an excellent and cheap climate to breed and raise them. The offal of the Sugar House fattens them like young pigs."¹³ Another Floridian stated, "A good number of the planters in our country are rapidly accumulating fortunes. They pocket annually, one hundred dollars of clear cash to the hand. This is a pretty good per cent upon \$800. Add to this the increase by birth in their slave property which doubles in fourteen years and we think it pretty apparent that the cotton culture is not a breaking business."¹⁴

George Noble Jones, writing from El Destino, his plantation in Jefferson County, Florida, boasted that his force of 120 Negroes increased itself more than 10 per cent in 1854. Jones attributed this to the proper care and management given his Negroes by his overseer: "I pay the highest wages in hopes of obtaining good overseers. That my negroes have not been seriously injured by the punishment they have received may be evidenced in their general appearance and in their natural increase." In 1860, Jones sold a group of his Chemonie Plantation hands since these slaves "had displayed no increase for some time." He replaced these slaves with a group from El Destino.¹⁵ James Whitehead of Leon County thought land and Negroes "constituted the best and safest property for young men of the South." Whitehead directed in his will that his son be given "six additional working hands," three to be young males and three to be young females.¹⁶ Benjamin F. Whitner took pride in the fact

12. Bancroft, *Slave Trading*, p. 71.

13. *Southern Cultivator* 18 (1860):324.

14. *Marianna Florida Whig*, January 20, 1849.

15. Phillips and Glunt, *Florida Plantation Records*, p. 124; Kathryn T. Abbey (ed.), "Documents Relating to El Destino and Chemonie Plantations, Middle Florida, 1828-1868," 7:193.

16. *Record of Wills*, Book A, pp. 113-17, Leon County.

that his Negroes were contented and happy, "as manifested by the rapid increase" in their numbers.¹⁷

Few written records are extant to show that slave-breeding was a systematic business, and southerners generally refuted these accusations of their northern opponents. Breeding slaves like cattle for market was a disgraceful business, though undoubtedly it occurred. Owners certainly considered slave-rearing of prime importance and did not hesitate to boast of what they considered an annual growth in their estates accruing from their infant slave populations. They encouraged their slaves to propagate since natural increase meant additional wealth. "Breeding slaves," "child-bearing women," "breeding period," and "too old to breed" are familiar terms in contemporary writings of the Old South.¹⁸

Zephaniah Kingsley, slave-trader and Florida planter, more than likely bred slaves for market. Kingsley came to Florida with seventy-four slaves in 1803 when he was granted 3,300 acres of land by the Spanish Crown. The grant carried with it a condition that the grantee introduce Negro slaves in sufficient numbers to improve and cultivate the land. Spain hoped by this more liberal colonization policy to strengthen her Florida frontier and build a colony of loyal subjects. Many persons took advantage of Spain's offer, not to become loyal Spanish citizens, but to develop the fertile lands along the St. Johns River and then to agitate for annexation of Florida to the United States. Zephaniah Kingsley was not one of these. He developed his slave-trading business in 1813 at the mouth of the St. Johns River, on Fort George Island, a strategic base from which to smuggle slaves into isolated areas of the Georgia and Carolina coasts.

17. Tallahassee *Florida Sentinel*, February 5, 1850. Another Florida resident noted that Samuel Hairston, "the richest man in Virginia," who owned between 1,600 and 1,700 slaves, had a natural increase in his slave population "at the rate of near 100 every year." *Florida Sentinel*, June 20, 1854; Davis and Redding, *Cavalcade*, pp. 60-63. William Wells Brown, Negro abolitionist writer, told of the "farmers who made a business of raising slaves for the market, and slave-traders who made a business of buying human beings in the slave-raising states and taking them to the far South" to sell. Brown wrote, in the "Stud Negro," of his interview with Joe Budge, a man with one hundred children. "How near together were your wives?" Brown asked. "Masser had fore plantations, an dey live 'bout on 'em, dem dat warn't sold." "Did your master sell some of your wives?" "O! Yes, ser, masser raised slaves fer de market, an' my stock ware called mighty good, kase I ware very strong an' could do a heap of work."

18. Bancroft, *Slave Trading*, p. 68; *The Farmers' Register* 5 (1837):302; Frederick Law Olmsted, *A Journey in the Seaboard Slave States*, p. 57; Charles S. Sydnor, *Slavery in Mississippi*, pp. 136-37.

His lucrative returns from human cargo made him hope that Florida would remain Spanish forever.¹⁹ When Florida was acquired from Spain in 1821, Kingsley's foreign slave-trading activity became illegal. By now, Kingsley had extensive enough holdings in acreage and slaves to continue his business in the domestic market.

Kingsley collected his slaves from the African coast, sailed with them to Fort George Island and, before marketing them, trained them on his plantation to become field hands and skilled laborers. He built a reputation for having superior Negroes to sell and demanded a higher price from southern planters who were "always desirous of filling their quarters with Kingsley's 'niggers.'" ²⁰ Kingsley was also in the shipping business. No doubt he sailed with his Sea Island cotton to Liverpool, England, then collected his cargo from Africa before returning to Florida, a routine of the "Triangular Trade" system.

When Kingsley came to Florida in 1803, he was already married to Anna Madgigene Jai, the daughter of an African chief. This "first" wife presided as hostess and mistress at Kingsley's main residence. She was "the mother of his favorite children, who were nurtured in luxury and given excellent European educations." Kingsley also had several mistresses and an undetermined number of offspring. Under Florida law, free Negroes and mulattoes could not inherit. During the 1830s, Kingsley removed his families (Anna Madgigene Jai, her children, and some of his mistresses with their children) from Florida to Haiti, thinking to circumvent the stringent laws concerning "free persons of color." By now, Kingsley had amassed a fortune from his business as slave-trader and planter. He died in 1843; in his will, he provided for two of his wives and all of his children. He directed that his slave families not be separated if they were to be sold. He also provided that his slaves have "the privilege of purchasing their freedom at one-half the price of valuation, on consideration of their migrating to Hayti, if they cannot be allowed to stay as free in this Territory." ²¹

19. Philip S. May, "Zephaniah Kingsley, Non-conformist, 1765-1843," pp. 145-50. Kingsley was the son of Zephaniah Kingsley, a Loyalist who was forced to flee from Charleston, South Carolina, during the American Revolution. Edwin L. Williams, Jr., "Negro Slavery in Florida," pp. 98-99.

20. May, "Zephaniah Kingsley," pp. 150-51.

21. *Ibid.*, pp. 154-57. For the fate of Kingsley's heirs and their inheritance, see chapter 6.

During the early period of cotton culture in Florida, the average price of a good slave was \$500. The price of cotton at this time ranged from ten to twenty cents a pound. In other areas of the South, the price of cotton more directly determined the price of slaves. For instance, in Alabama, between 1830 and 1840, if cotton was selling at ten cents, the price of a prime field hand was placed at \$1,000, if at twelve cents, \$1,200.²² An appraisalment of the slaves and other personal property belonging to William Bellamy (deceased) in 1846 shows that his field hands were valued between \$400 and \$650, and at the same time, 125 bales of cotton were sold from his plantation for eight cents a pound, or \$32 a bale.²³

In 1840, the range in value of 65 slaves belonging to the estate of Jacob Robinson in Jackson County was from \$125 to \$800, for example, "Patty, age 50, \$300; Affy, age 15, \$600; Squire, age 26, \$800." Age was the factor determining value, though children were valued from \$125 to \$300, young girls from thirteen to seventeen were valued from \$500 to \$600, and field hands from \$700 to \$800.²⁴ In 1843, a group of 16 slaves belonging to John S. Randolph were sold at public auction for \$3,655 to secure debt. This was an exceptionally low average price. The fact that six of these slaves were young children, that there were no field hands among the group, and that "Old Grace," age 70, was worth only five dollars, accounts for the depreciation in their average value.²⁵

In 1852, Simeon L. Sparkman of Hillsborough County paid \$1,500 for two slaves, "Grace, a woman servant, age about nineteen years, and Ned, a male servant, age about sixteen years—both slaves for life and sound in body and mind." At another time, Sparkman purchased a seven-year-old boy "Lewis" who was "sound both in body and mind." A bill of sale guaranteed that the slave was sound in body and mind, an assurance for the buyer that the slave had no mental or physical defects. Slaves, individually or in groups, were used as collateral to secure loans. "Winney and her child Hester" became the property of John Mercer when Madison Post defaulted on his loan of \$417. A group of ten slaves (six adults and four children, two of whom were mulattoes) became the property of the

22. Charles S. Davis, *The Cotton Kingdom in Alabama*, p. 73.

23. *Inventories, Appraisements and Accounts*, Book A, pp. 15, 16, Jefferson County.

24. *Record of Estates*, Book A, p. 24, Jackson County.

25. *Ibid.*, p. 719.

firm of Clark and Ferris when Franklin Branch defaulted in his payment of \$3,527 to these merchants. In another transfer of slave property, a Negro mother, Sharlotte, and her two small children, Augustus, six, and Henry, eighteen months, were sold to John I. Hooker for \$900.²⁶

After 1850, the average price of slaves in Florida rose steadily, and, after 1855, at an accelerated rate, while the price of cotton remained rather constant at ten to thirteen cents a pound (Sea Island cotton brought more). In 1850, the field hands on James Whitehead's plantation in Leon County were valued at slightly less than a thousand dollars, while the cotton sold from his plantation at various times throughout the year ranged from 12½ cents to 14¼ cents a pound.²⁷ In 1858, cotton sold from Whitehead's plantation averaged from ten to eleven cents a pound and field hands were valued at \$1,100.²⁸

As the demand for slaves became greater than the increase in their supply (creating a shortage of labor), the increase in the price of slaves rose out of all proportion to the increase in the price of cotton. By 1860, while the price of cotton remained constant, the price of good Negroes had doubled or, sometimes, tripled. As an example, William E. Kilcrease, at the time of his death in 1860, owned a "No. 1 blacksmith, Dennis" valued at \$3,500, another blacksmith valued at \$1,800, a carpenter valued at \$1,800, two cooks valued at \$1,200 and \$1,500 apiece, and many other Negroes ranging in value from \$1,000 to \$1,500.²⁹ Because of the Federal blockade during the Civil War, growers could not ship their cotton to market (though some did "run the blockade"). A cotton shortage resulted, and the price soared to an average of seventy-five cents a pound. The ratio of increase in price between slaves and cotton was now altered. Short staple cotton sold by Sarah A. Lines from her plantation in Gadsden County in 1863 brought 53½ cents a pound and her Sea Island brought \$1.25.³⁰ That same year, some Negroes be-

26. *Deed Records*, Book B, pp. 19, 30, 61, 74, 135, Hillsborough County.

27. *Books of Sales of Personal Estates, 1846-1860*, pp. 78-81; *Inventory and Appraisements*, Book C, pp. 125-28, Leon County.

28. *Books of Sales of Personal Estates, 1846-1860*, pp. 266-74, Leon County.

29. William E. Kilcrease Estate (no file number), Probate Records, Gadsden County.

30. *Inventory and Appraisements* (no volume number), p. 790, Gadsden County.

**Administrators Sale.
WILL BE SOLD,
AT PUBLIC AUCTION,**



ON the 3d Monday of September next, at 9 o'clock, in the forenoon, at the Auction Store of Henry Michelett, in the City of Pensacola,

A Negro Woman & Child,
The property of Henry Shepherd, Esq deceased. Terms made known at the time and place of sale.

Clark Jackson,
Ad'mr.

Advertisement of slave auction (from *The Floridian*, Pensacola, September 13, 1823)

longing to the estate of Francis J. Ross in Hamilton County were valued at \$2,000, \$3,000, and \$4,000.³¹

To insure the best possible price for Negroes, a certain amount of grooming was done to prepare them for market. They were given a fresh set of clothing to have them create a pleasing appearance of cleanliness and well-being. The women were sometimes given bright showy cotton prints or gaily figured bandannas. The men, to show that they were spirited, were often given a drink of gin or whiskey. Sometimes the whole group might be given a shiny silver coin to put them in a happy mood or to make them seem cheerful.³²

Prospective purchasers usually examined Negroes carefully to make sure there were no physical defects or scars from whippings to indicate bad character. The age of the Negro was also a condition of his value. Planters were hesitant to purchase Negroes whose advancing years would prevent a profitable output of work. There were some exceptions, such as house servants and skilled Negroes who might be used as cooks, nurses, carpenters, bricklayers, or blacksmiths, but the average purchaser preferred to buy young Negroes.³³

Because of the large number of slaves in the labor market it was not unusual for planters to buy and sell Negroes already in the area. Court records throughout Florida frequently relate transactions of this nature. In some instances, the complete plantation was sold, including slaves, livestock, crops, farm equipment, buildings, and other accessories. Contemporary newspapers are also filled with advertisements offering complete plantations for sale, such as this one:

Will be sold on the premises at public outcry, LANIER'S PLANTATION, in Madison County, Florida, comprising 1,610 acres of first rate land. Terms—One third cash and balance in two equal instalments drawing eight per cent interest, and secured by mortgage on the land; 437 acres are cleared and in cultivation, and under excellent fence. And there are on the premises a comfortable dwelling, good out houses, 9 good negro cabins, good barn, gin house and screw.

31. "Petition for Partition of Personal Estate," December 17, 1863, Francis J. Ross Estate (no file number), Hamilton County.

32. Bancroft, *Slave Trading*, p. 113.

33. Sydnor, *Slavery in Mississippi*, pp. 134-40.

ALSO

SEVENTY VALUABLE SLAVES

including one Carpenter and Blacksmith, and a good house servant and seamstress.

ALSO

About 5,000 bushels Corn

" 20,000 pounds of Fodder

" 50 bushels Seed Peas

" 250 head of hogs

" 40 head of Cattle

" 14 Working Mules

Two large road Wagons

One light two horse Wagon

One good Ox Wagon

One Lanier Mill

Blacksmith Tools, Farming Utensils, etc.³⁴

At Waukeenah in Jefferson County, Robert H. Gamble advertised his plantation and slaves for sale: "The Wirtland Plantation is offered for sale—102 likely negroes, 2,300 acres of land (about 1,150 under cultivation, remainder woods). Also 25 mules, small stock of cattle and good stock of hogs. Dwelling and out-houses good and located on high pine land; negro and plantation buildings all good. Located on Tallahassee and Monticello Road, 3½ miles from latter place where there are churches of various denominations and excellent society."³⁵ At Miccosukie in Leon County, G. W. Moore offered for sale his plantation consisting of a "comfortable dwelling-house and negro cabins . . . and if desired, fifteen or sixteen likely NEGROES, men, women and children who can be purchased with the place, also horses, mules, hogs, stock, cattle. . . ."³⁶ "About 10 likely negroes" were advertised for sale from the estate of Richard Harrison in Madison County: "For negroes, cash, for mules and other personal property, terms, payable with interest." Harrison's estate was quite large, consisting of "excellent quarters for about 150 negroes." His plantation and only ten of his slaves were being offered for sale.³⁷

34. Tallahassee *Floridian and Journal*, November 15, 1856.

35. *Ibid.*, July 30, 1853.

36. *Ibid.*, November 15, 1856.

37. *Ibid.*, December 5, 1857; *Record Book of Annual Returns*, pp. 259-71, 309, Madison County. Richard Harrison died in 1854, leaving an estate valued at \$150,000. He had many outstanding debts and his widow was forced to sell some of his land and slaves to satisfy his creditors.

Various classifications determined individual prices for slaves. For instance, blacksmiths, carpenters, seamstresses, prime field hands, brick masons, and house servants were more valuable than other Negroes and brought higher prices. Sex, age, temperament, physical condition, skill, and experience were also determining factors. Negroes recently imported from Africa were considered less valuable than "country" Negroes from an older state like Virginia.³⁸

Field hands between eighteen and thirty years of age brought more than older Negroes, and male hands brought higher prices than female hands. Children were often priced according to height and weight and infants were valued by the pound. Attractive females and skilled workers sometimes sold for triple the value, and in some instances the buyer would pay more for a group of Negroes upon agreement that the old and infirm would be excluded.³⁹

At the time of William Bellamy's death in 1846, most of the 108 slaves on his "home" plantation in Jefferson County were appraised and classified as nineteen family groups, with the value of each family given. "Moses, Molly, Parris, in a family" were valued at \$1,000, while another family, consisting of eleven Negroes, was valued at \$2,750; some of these were small children. "Hannah," who was old, was "of no value."⁴⁰ In 1851, Reddin W. Parramore's Negro slaves were valued separately: "Wash, a man about 30 yrs. \$600; Cherry, a young woman 16 yrs. \$600; Amanda, a woman 19, unhealthy, \$400." Mary, who was thirty years old and blind, had no value.⁴¹

Negroes for sale were frequently advertised in the Florida newspapers in the following manner: "A NEGRO WOMAN 26 years of age,

38. Gray, *History of Agriculture*, 2:664-66. Gray lists prices quoted in 1853 by a slave broker in Richmond, Virginia:

Best men (18-25)	\$1,200 to \$1,300
Fair men (18-25)	959 to 1,050
Boys, five feet in height	850 to 950
Boys, four feet	375 to 400
Young women	800 to 1,000
Girls, five feet	750 to 850
Girls, four feet	350 to 450

39. *Ibid.*; Probate Records, Gadsden, Hamilton, Jefferson, Leon, and Madison counties. Inventories and appraisements of estates listing Negro slaves as personal property usually give their first name, age, value, and sometimes their state of health.

40. *Inventories, Appraisements and Accounts*, Book A, pp. 15-18, Jefferson County.

41. *Record Book of Annual Returns*, pp. 20, 21, Madison County.

and a Girl, her child, about 6 years of age. The woman is a good house as well as field hand—sold for no fault. For terms apply to John D. Myrick, Marianna.”⁴² Another Negro woman was advertised “TO BE SOLD AT PRIVATE SALE, A first rate seamstress and house servant, aged 19 years. If not sold before the 1st of January, she will be sold at public auction.”⁴³

When planters died insolvent, leaving their estates heavily indebted, their slaves and other personal property were sold at public auction to the highest bidder, by order of the probate court, to satisfy their creditors. Sales of this nature were advertised for a month or so in advance, and purchasers were required to pay cash. In 1852, Elizabeth Dulany was forced to sell twenty-eight of her Negroes “at public auction for cash to the highest bidder at the Court House in Tallahassee” to satisfy her husband’s creditors.⁴⁴

Owners sometimes stipulated in their wills that their Negroes be sold. Six Negroes belonging to Jonathan Thomas in Gadsden County were sold “in accordance with his last will and testament.” Since Thomas’ Negroes were not being sold to satisfy indebtedness, terms were offered to the purchaser, requiring that one-fourth of the amount be paid at the time of sale and the remainder in six months at 8 per cent interest.⁴⁵

In some instances, groups of Negroes were bought and used as work gangs by persons who contracted to build roads or railways, then were sold when the construction was completed. An interesting sale of this nature took place upon completion of a South Carolina railroad and was advertised in newspapers throughout the South:

IMPORTANT SALE OF NEGROES, MULES, ETC.

April 27, 1852

J. C. Sproull & Co., having nearly completed their contract on the South Carolina Railroad, will sell at Aiken, to the highest bidder; 130 negroes, 85 mules, 3 horses, 90 carts and harness, 25 wheel-barrows, 190 shovels.

These negroes are beyond doubt the likeliest gang, for their number, ever offered, consisting almost entirely of young fellows from age 21 to 30, some few boys, from 12 to 16, and 4

42. Marianna *Florida Whig*, July 15, 1858.

43. Tallahassee *Floridian and Journal*, September 19, 1857.

44. Tallahassee *Florida Sentinel*, December 9, 1851.

45. *Ibid.*, June 3, 1851.

women. Among them, some first-rate blacksmiths, carpenters, coopers, brick-molders, wheel-wrights and wagoners. Among the women, one excellent weaver and seamstress, another, a good cook. All well-trained and disciplined for Rail and plank-road working. . . . Terms—cash Aiken, S.C., immediately on the Railroad, 16 miles from Hamburg.⁴⁶

When Negroes were sold in groups, their average price was less than when they were sold separately. A group of fifteen Negroes, mostly adults, were auctioned at Quincy, Florida, in 1856 and brought \$12,260. Another group, including sixty-five Negroes of all ages, brought \$43,900. These were sold on credit, to be paid for over a period of one, two, and three years, at an interest rate of 8 per cent. Other Negroes, sold separately, brought higher prices. For instance, "Jimsey, field-hand," brought \$1,203 and Leonard, another field hand, \$1,300. A man, his wife, and four children brought \$4,002. A woman and four children brought \$4,150. They were all field Negroes.⁴⁷

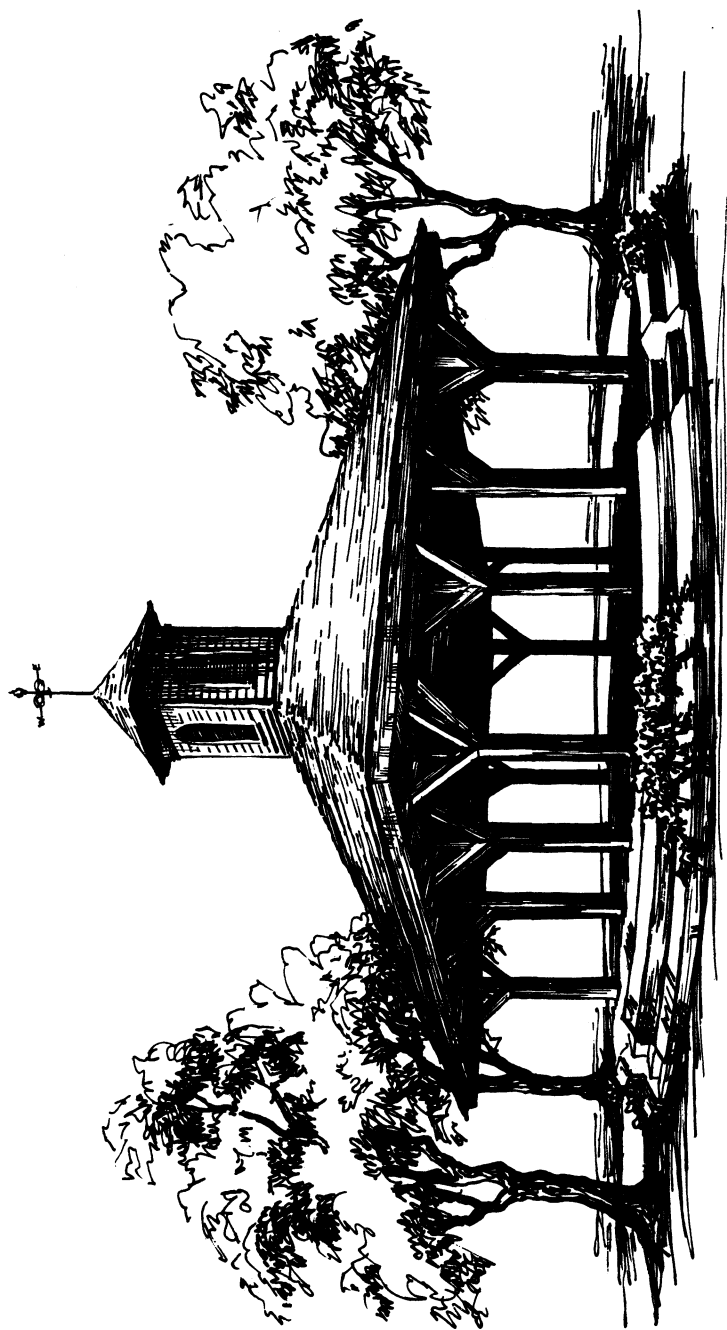
As the demand for and thus the price of Negroes spiraled upward, many southerners seemed to be obsessed with buying slaves. One writer, commenting on the high prices being paid at Richmond, Virginia, in 1857, declared, "Millions of money have been disbursed during the past fifteen months for negroes who have commanded more exorbitant prices than ever before. All negroes are sold for cash which is supplied by means of Northern sight drafts which are disposed of to the brokers. Enough of these sight checks are sold to supply the Richmond market with Northern exchange."⁴⁸

Southern economic prosperity was relatively untouched by the financial crisis of 1857 that caused a depression in other parts of the nation. The depression seemed not to alter the price being paid for slaves. One writer commented that "42 negroes including all grades,

46. *Ibid.*, March 30, 1852.

47. *Tallahassee Floridian and Journal*, February 9, 1856; *Inventory and Appraisements*, Probate Records, Book C, pp. 58-59, 125-27, Leon County. Inventories listing slaves belonging to the estates of John Parkhill and John Whitehead in 1856 and 1857 show their average value to be slightly less than \$1,000.

48. *Tallahassee Floridian and Journal*, August 29, 1857; Gray, *History of Agriculture*, 2:651. Gray refers to Virginia, Maryland, Delaware, North Carolina, and Kentucky as the "selling" states, and South Carolina and Missouri after 1850. The "buying" states were Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, Tennessee, and Florida, and Texas after 1850. Transfers of slaves were also taking place within the states.



Slave market at Louisville, Georgia

from infant to decrepit and aged, were sold for \$30,000, and there were no carpenters or blacksmiths among them.”⁴⁹ This sale took place in Florida. At another sale in Griffin, Georgia, six months later, a Negro man sold for \$1,512, a Negro boy for \$1,111, an old man sold for \$899, and a woman who was “diseased” sold for \$750. At still another sale that same day in Griffin, \$50,000 worth of Negroes were sold. In Florida a few months later, “41 Negroes, old and young” brought \$41,000.⁵⁰

Early in 1859, it was reported in a Tallahassee newspaper that “Colonel Berry, the Prince of auctioneers, sold a lot of negroes on Monday last, which brought prices considerably in advance of any sales made in this city since the ‘Flush Times’ of 1836. As a specimen, we mention that one girl, age 16, was knocked off at \$1,300. George, age 40, brought \$1,120, Sam, 19, \$1,410, Janice, age 30, with 2 children, 5 and 7, \$1,784, Adeline, age 20, and child, age 1 year, \$1,410, Peter, 12 years, \$1,195, Nimrod, wife and child, \$1,800, Nelson, age 14, \$1,260, and a boy, age 10, \$915. A part of these negroes were sold for half cash, balance in 12 months. The others for cash. All of them were bought by gentlemen in medium circumstances.”⁵¹

Much of the dwindling supply of Negroes resulted from the enormous demand for them in the Southwest, mostly in Texas. As more and more Negroes were removed to Texas, planters throughout the lower South became alarmed. One Floridian declared, “everywhere in the slave holding states, an extraordinary advance in price of slaves has taken place. In some instances, prices realized would have been deemed fabulous a short time ago and as insuring ruin of purchaser.”⁵² A Milledgeville, Georgia, editor declared, “A fever is raging in Georgia for buying slaves. What is to be done to supply the deficiency produced by the great demand for negroes in the Southwest. Men are borrowing money at exorbitant rates of interest to buy negroes at exorbitant prices. . . . The old rule of pricing negroes by the price of cotton by the pound—that is, if cotton is worth 12 cents, a negro man is worth \$1,200—does not seem to be regarded. Negroes are 25 percent higher now with cotton at 10½ cents.”⁵³

49. Tallahassee *Floridian and Journal*, September 14, 1857.

50. *Ibid.*, January 23, 1858.

51. *Ibid.*, February 12, 1859.

52. *Ibid.*, February 11, 1860.

53. *Ibid.*

Some people suggested reopening the slave trade to alleviate the shortage. One Florida planter complained in 1859 that the high prices demanded for Negro slaves were "quite beyond the reach of poor men" and that "advocates for the reopening of the trade in 'wool' were increasing." He thought that "investing in a shipload to be landed off the coast of Florida would be profitable."⁵⁴ He, like others, thought the importation of slaves from Africa would solve the labor shortage problem and lower the price of Negroes.⁵⁵

Though the importation of Negro slaves into the United States from Africa or any foreign shore was illegal, it is evident that this foreign slave trade persisted throughout the antebellum period. Efforts were made to suppress the illegal traffic, and United States naval patrols were assigned for such a purpose. Occasionally slave ships carrying huge cargoes were run down and caught. More often than not, these "runners" slipped past patrols and landed their cargoes successfully at some remote spot where they were met by accomplices waiting to receive the Negroes, who were later sold in the domestic market. Historians disagree in their estimates concerning numbers of slaves illegally imported into the United States from Africa between 1808 and 1861. The figures range from 54,000 to over 270,000, but there is no way to determine an accurate count. Recent studies, thought to be more reliable, use the lower import figures and also suggest that the major markets for African slaves were Cuba and Brazil.⁵⁶

In 1849 the American bark *Ann D. Richardson* was intercepted and taken over at Rio de Janeiro by the United States brig *Perry* on suspicion of having been engaged in the slave trade.⁵⁷ In 1857, an American "slaver," the *Mazeppa*, was captured at East Cardenas,

54. Ibid., February 19, 1859.

55. Gray, *History of Agriculture*, 2:669. Gray refers to conventions at Charleston, New Orleans, and Savannah where resolutions were made by persons from the lower South to reopen the slave trade. The opposition, led by persons from the "slave breeding states," especially Virginia, succeeded in defeating any action.

56. Peter Duignan and Clarence Clendenen, *The United States and the African Slave Trade, 1619-1862*, pp. 18, 19; Philip D. Curtin, *The Atlantic Slave Trade, A Census*, pp. 72-75; Warren S. Howard, *American Slavers and the Federal Law, 1837-1862*, pp. 144-50. Gray, *History of Agriculture*, 2:648-49, suggests a figure of 270,000. See *Southern Cultivator* 17 (1859):68-70, 133, 134. See Tallahassee *Floridian and Journal*, August 6, 1859, November 10, 1860, for estimates that 250,000 slaves were brought into the United States illegally between 1808 and 1861.

57. Apalachicola *Commercial Advertiser*, February 15, 1849.

Cuba, with 1,500 slaves on board.⁵⁸ The Spanish government gave official recognition to slave-trading.

Warren S. Howard writes that much of the reporting to government officials, and in newspapers, of slave ships landing and unloading cargoes was not based upon factual evidence.⁵⁹ For example, rumors were spread in 1858 "that a suspicious vessel was seen hovering off the north Florida coast; that another vessel going aground had possibly landed slaves." In 1859, it was reported that slaves had been landed at Jupiter Inlet in central Florida, but there was no proof of this. At the same time, it was reported that 600 Africans had been landed near New Smyrna, 120 miles north of Jupiter. These reports may have referred to the same landing or no landing at all, since no evidence could be established.

Slave-traders with large groups of Negroes in their possession were sometimes suspected of having acquired their stock illegally and were taken into custody. Two persons were arrested in 1849 on suspicion of buying and selling slaves illegally at Apalachicola. They were caught preparing to sell a group of Negroes smuggled in from the Gulf of Mexico. Though arrested, they had friends who secured their bonds, so they were not jailed.⁶⁰ The punishment for engaging in slave-trading illegally was not severe.

In 1854, a New Orleans newspaper announced that "several cargoes of negroes, direct from the coast of Africa, were landed at a depot on the Pearl River in Mississippi and sold." To escape the penalties imposed by law, the persons who sold these Negroes classified them as "voluntary laborers" who emigrated from Africa of their own volition as indentured persons, obligated to labor for a term of years.⁶¹

Slave-trading was a lucrative business and northern capital supported the traffic. "The slave fleet," working in and out of northern ports, is estimated to have had approximately forty vessels. They ranged from 100 to 500 tons and were manned by crews of 15 to 25 men; each vessel could carry 400 to 600 slaves. Between 1834 and 1854, approximately fifty "slavers" were captured by United States naval patrols and taken into the port of New York. There were great profits in this illegal business. It is estimated that the net return

58. Tallahassee *Floridian and Journal*, October 17, 1847.

59. *American Slavers and the Federal Law*, p. 143.

60. *Apalachicola Commercial Advertiser*, March 8, 1854.

61. Tallahassee *Floridian and Journal*, March 13, 1854.

from a cargo of 600 slaves purchased in Africa for \$50 each, and landed at Cuba in 1861, was 56 per cent, or \$90,500 on an investment of \$159,500.⁶²

The fanaticism of the abolitionists played strongly upon southern feelings. Persons who in former times would not have encouraged a reopening of the slave trade began to support it openly. In 1854, a Florida resident declared, "There is a growing disposition in this country to withdraw the restrictions on the African slave trade and re-open it to the enterprise of our merchants. A few years ago the proposition would have been received with a shudder and found not one advocate in the whole Union; but the fanaticism and discussion of the abolitionists have led a good many minds to examine the subject more closely. . . . There are many who think bringing the wild savages of Africa to this country, and making good industrious men and women of them, would be an absolute blessing."⁶³

In 1859, a "slaver" was captured in St. Joseph's Bay near Tallahassee after it had landed "some six or seven hundred Africans somewhere on the coast of Florida."⁶⁴ Another, the *Majestic*, was captured off Puerto Rico after it had successfully landed over a thousand slaves.⁶⁵ In 1860, a French bark carrying 422 Africans from the Congo River area was captured along the Cuban coast while preparing to land at Neuvas.⁶⁶

There were Negro slaves on Florida plantations whose place of birth was Africa.⁶⁷ Whether they were smuggled into Florida and purchased from "Negro-traders" or whether they were purchased from slave markets outside the state is not known. At any rate, these "boughton" Negroes were looked down upon by the Negroes who came to the plantation through inheritance. A caste system existed within groups of Negroes on plantations, and they rated their own standing in life according to the position held by their owner.⁶⁸

The owner sometimes developed a feeling of personal regard

62. Duignan and Clendenen, *United States and African Slave Trade*, pp. 59, 60.

63. Tallahassee *Florida Sentinel*, July 25, 1854.

64. Tallahassee *Floridian and Journal*, March 26, 1859.

65. Ibid. These figures may be highly exaggerated. See Curtin, *The Atlantic Slave Trade*, pp. 3-13.

66. Tallahassee *Floridian and Journal*, June 2, 1860.

67. Unpublished Census Returns (Social Statistics, Schedule 3), 1850.

68. Eppes, *Negro of the Old South*, pp. 48, 51.

and human attachment for his slaves. The plantation system, based upon a patriarchal arrangement, fostered such a regard.⁶⁹ Occasionally, through a feeling of genuine devotion, slaveowners stipulated in their wills that their Negroes be freed. The will of William Oliphant, dated 1827, is noteworthy in this respect. Oliphant provided that his Negro woman, Maria, and her four children be allowed all the privileges of free persons of color and that \$250 be paid each of them to cover transportation costs to a free state of their choice. The will of Harry S. Clark, dated 1850, stipulated that Clark's "Negro man Albert be manumitted if the laws of the state will permit it."⁷⁰

Owners sometimes directed in their wills that slaves be treated humanely. Richard J. Mays made his will in 1864, stating that "life is at best uncertain, and we should be prepared for its close by having our house 'set in order.'" Mays divided his slaves among his wife and children and requested that they be treated "not as property, but as human beings, to be . . . cared for as such. They must not be neglected, it is a duty sanctioned by your interest and there [*sic*] welfare."⁷¹

Nancy Delaughter made her will in 1864, leaving her Negroes and other property to her children and grandchildren. She requested that her slaves remain in family groups and that her estate be kept together "until the expiration of two years after the date of the ratification of a Treaty of Peace between the Confederate States of America and the United States."⁷² The will of John Finlayson, dated 1865, stipulated that his slaves be divided among his children in family groups as nearly as possible.

Owners occasionally directed in their wills that their slave families be kept together when property distributions were made to beneficiaries. When a division was to be made and the value of one family group of Negroes exceeded that of another, rather than separate families a tract of land or other property was bequeathed to equalize the division.⁷³ John Lipscomb, who had extensive holdings in Madison County, directed in his will, dated 1856, that his

69. Gray, *History of Agriculture*, 2:501.

70. William Oliphant's will, October 27, 1827, ms., Florida State Library; *Old Wills*, p. 8, Hillsborough County.

71. *Wills and Letters Testamentary*, Book BB, pp. 85-87, Madison County. Mays was the great-grandfather of Colin Kelly, World War II hero.

72. *Ibid.*, pp. 80-91.

73. *Wills and Letters Testamentary*, Book B, pp. 155-58, Jefferson County.

Negroes and land be "kept together" for the support of his wife and seven children. Each child received a \$12,000 legacy in slaves and other property. Lipscomb, being concerned with the "good morals of his negroes," requested that his executors "avoid the separation of families."⁷⁴ James McLeod of Hillsborough County provided in his will, dated 1860, that his "negro woman, Jane and her son, Calhoun" be sold "to one and the same person, as it is my wish, so far as I can control their conditions in this life, to have them owned by one master."⁷⁵

Owners sometimes directed in their wills that their slaves be sold at public auction. William R. Ashley, who had no immediate family, requested that his slaves "not be separated but sold in one body at Public Auction."⁷⁶ These beneficent-sounding phrases were really no guarantee that the slave family would not be separated. When the slave was security on borrowed money, he was often "secured" by the lender, or when economic circumstances became adverse for a new owner of slave families, a forced sale at public auction was often the result. Removal of a slave from his family as little as fifty miles away had a devastating effect upon the family relationship since removal ended all associations. As harsh as any feature of slavery was the traffic in slaves which encouraged the breaking up of families. It can safely be said that the phrases found in many of the old wills directing that slave families be kept together were motivated not so much by any compassion of the owner but by a materialistic desire for what was considered to be essential for the emotional welfare of the slave. Insuring his "good morals" meant insuring the happiness and contentment of the slave which resulted in fewer disciplinary problems and a better output of work.

Closely allied with slave-trading was the practice common throughout the plantation belt in Florida of owners hiring out their slaves. In certain instances, when planters died and left a wife and minor children, they directed in their wills that their slaves be hired out, the proceeds to be used for education and maintenance of a child, or for partial support of their families. In other instances, administrators or guardians, legally responsible for estates, hired out Negroes belonging to the estate as a form of investment and income for the heirs. Slaves were also hired from owners to do construction

74. *Wills and Letters Testamentary*, Book BB, pp. 37-41, Madison County.

75. *Old Wills*, p. 57, Hillsborough County.

76. *Ibid.*, p. 12.

work on roads or railways, and skilled Negroes were sometimes hired individually for a certain period during the year to work as carpenters or blacksmiths.⁷⁷

The usual period of hire was for a year, and the person hiring was expected to furnish the Negro with at least two suits of clothing, a hat, shoes, and a blanket. The rate of hire varied with the type of labor. The average annual rate of hire in Florida prior to 1850 was less than a hundred dollars. During the 1850s the average rate increased, and yearly Negro hire ranged from \$100 to \$400.⁷⁸

In 1844, approximately forty Negroes (children with their parents were not counted) belonging to the estate of Hardy Bryan Croom were hired out to various persons for a total of \$2,040; the following year, their hire brought \$1,920.⁷⁹ Twelve of the 109 Negroes belonging to the minor children of S. H. Butler's estate were hired out for their support in 1853 and brought \$1,475. The following year, fourteen Negroes belonging to the Butler children were hired out and brought \$1,990. Six of them worked for the Orange Mill Company at \$172.50 each; the others were hired by individuals. An interesting notation made on the accounting sheet by George W. Call, guardian for the Butler children, states that "The boy George is not included in the hire, being taken sick with the Small pox, and was necessarily sent to the hospital where the charges together with lost time, consumed his wages."⁸⁰

Jeremiah D. Reid stipulated in his will of 1854 that twenty-seven of his Negro slaves be hired from time to time for his daughter Sally until she reached maturity. Reid directed that his daughter be "clothed, educated, and boarded out of the proceeds of the hire of the slaves." He also left her all of his "notes and money for the special purpose of assisting in her education, clothing, and board," and divided his remaining property, including two plantations, equipment, livestock, and Negroes, among his wife and other children.⁸¹

77. Deed and Probate Records, 1840-60, Gadsden, Jefferson, Leon, Hamilton, and Madison counties; Weymouth T. Jordan, *Hugh Davis and His Alabama Plantation*, p. 81.

78. Gray, *History of Agriculture*, 2:668. The rate of hire was roughly the same in other southern states. Gray states that in 1855 Negroes were hired out for \$200 a year in the Southwest and for \$300 and more in northwestern Louisiana by 1860.

79. *Book of Sales of Personal Estates, 1846-1860*, p. 15, Leon County.

80. *Record Book of Annual Returns*, pp. 127, 220, Madison County.

81. *Wills and Letters Testamentary*, Book BB, pp. 7-10, Madison County.

In 1860, William E. Kilcrease hired a Negro boy "Frank" from Julia F. Edmonds for \$200. The indenture for this contract, dated January 1, 1860, and signed by Kilcrease, stipulated that the Negro was "to be furnished with a good suit of Summer [*sic*] and Winter Clothing, Hat, Shoes, and Blanket, with interest at eight per cent after maturity."⁸² In 1864, nine Negroes, eight of them women, belonging to the estate of Francis J. Ross were hired out for partial support of his grandchildren, at a rate that brought \$2,300. The ninth was a boy, "Hanson," who was hired to Thomas Hunter for \$400. By 1864, with the Civil War in its final stage and the labor shortage acute, there were probably few male Negro hands available for hire.⁸³

Hiring free white laborers throughout the South was frowned upon, especially after 1850 when a sensitivity to abolition doctrine became more acute. Southerners were urged to employ slave labor, particularly for construction work on railroads and highways. A report made by the president of the Charleston and Savannah Railroad in 1855 stressed the advantage of hiring Negro slaves rather than white laborers from the North and foreign ports: "Slave labor is the kind we should use at the South because it is cheaper, can be kept under better discipline, worked both in summer and winter, and the planter can be relieved from those annoyances which always accompany introduction among our plantations of contractors with hiring white labor."⁸⁴

The hire for Negro men to work on railroads was \$180 a year. The plans and promotional schemes advanced in Florida during the 1850s for construction of several railroads led promoters to recommend that Negroes be purchased by the railroad companies. They argued that the annual expense of maintaining a Negro slave was no more than the annual cost of hiring one. They based their argument upon the premise that these were the costs of maintaining a Negro purchased at \$1,000:

Interest on \$1,000 at 7% per annum	\$ 70
Insurance	25
Clothing	20
Bacon	15

82. William E. Kilcrease Estate (no file number), Gadsden County.

83. Francis J. Ross Estate (no file number), Hamilton County.

84. Tallahassee *Florida Sentinel*, February 24, 1855.

Corn, Molasses, tobacco	15
Overseeing each hand	10
Tools, blacksmiths' and carpenters' work	16
Total expense of a slave owned by the Company. ⁸⁵	\$171

Many persons in Florida were opposed to the system of hiring out because it encouraged a certain amount of freedom for the slave, especially as the system developed in the cities, where slaves were allowed to hire themselves out for wages, paying to the owner a stipulated amount and retaining the rest for themselves. Though the amount retained was very small, it gave the slave some independence. Under this system, the slave located his own job, agreed upon the amount of the wages, and gave to the owner a certain amount weekly or monthly. Opposition to this type of hire became especially sharp after 1850. Memorials were sent to the Florida legislature and to the governors petitioning for laws to prevent hiring and to restrict the Negro in other ways. An act was passed in 1854 to prevent slaves from hiring their own time in the city of St. Augustine. Any person permitting a slave "to hire his or her own time, or to go at large and trade as a freeman or free woman" must pay a fine of fifty dollars.⁸⁶

In 1856, the residents of Gadsden County petitioned the legislature to "correct the evil" of allowing slaves to hire their own time in Quincy and the surrounding area. The petitioners complained that it had "become a common practice for owners, guardians, and agents to allow their slaves to hire their time, or in other words to work out for wages, and at such times and places as said slaves may think proper to employ themselves, not infrequently to the prejudice of the community in which such custom prevails." More than this, the petitioners resented the fact that it was "getting common for slaves to own horses and buggies, and to go to and fro of nights and of Sundays as they may desire." Some of the owners of livery stables in the towns were allowing slaves to hire horses and buggies and "not infrequently to the no little inconvenience of the Whites. All of which your memorialists believe to be an evil which loudly calls for correction, they being fully under the impression that al-

85. Ibid.

86. "An Act to Prevent Slaves in the City of St. Augustine from Hiring Their Own Time," ms., Florida State Library, Tallahassee; Wade, *Slavery in the Cities*, pp. 28-54, 243-81.

lowing some slaves such latitude is calculated to create dissatisfaction among others.”⁸⁷

These fears of Floridians and southerners generally, that the hiring system in the cities was eroding the very foundation of slavery, were well founded. City slaves were free of the restrictions and police regulations put upon plantation slaves and their time was their own when they were not working. In the words of one northern observer who viewed the conditions of slaves in the cities, “The atmosphere of the city is too life-giving and creates thought. It is the doom of them all to be sent back to the gloom of the plantation cabin.”⁸⁸

87. “Bill to Prevent Slaves . . . from Hiring Their Own Time.”

88. Wade, *Slavery in the Cities*, p. 246, as quoted in Wade.

Slave Labor

Slavery was first of all a labor system, and the primary concern of the owner was getting work out of his slaves. As the work was basically agricultural, the vast majority of slaves worked on cotton plantations. Many plantations were small units using only a few slaves, where slaves and owners worked together in the fields at various tasks, but when the number of slaves owned included thirty or more field hands, an overseer was usually employed. There has been a tendency to identify slaveholders as planters when they owned this number or more working hands and employed an overseer to direct the work. One overseer directing fifty or more Negroes was thought to be a good balance. If the number reached one hundred or more, another overseer might be employed and the force divided to operate more than one plantation.¹

The census returns for 1860 list 468 overseers directing the work of slaves on Florida plantations. It is fairly certain that most of the plantations of average size (1,500–2,500 acres) using thirty or more field laborers, and certainly the larger ones, were managed by overseers. Nearly half of the slave population of the South was owned by slaveholders operating plantations of these dimensions. It was

1. Sydnor, *Slavery in Mississippi*, pp. 67–69. Sydnor analyzes these ratios for Mississippi planters. Also see Gray, *History of Agriculture*; John Hebron Moore, *Agriculture in Ante-Bellum Mississippi*; Kenneth M. Stampp, *The Peculiar Institution; Slavery in the Ante-Bellum South*; James Benson Sellers, *Slavery in Alabama*. Florida planters divided their forces to operate more than one plantation when holdings warranted such division.

thought that a force of less than thirty slaves could not be worked profitably. C. W. Howard, associate editor for *The Southern Cultivator*, deplored the way many young men of the South were entering professions because "they owned but twenty or thirty negroes and thought it impossible to make a support with so small a force. When asked how the rest of the world managed who had no negroes, the reply was 'our system differs from theirs, ours requires a large amount of labor.'"²

The large plantations were elaborate organizations, resembling somewhat the modern factory system, with extensive supervision by the owner or his overseer or both. The tendency of Florida planters, and those in other cotton states, was to develop more than one plantation as ownership in land and slaves increased sufficiently to warrant profitable returns. The responsibility of the owner was great, and successful operation of a large plantation required good judgment, patience, and control and regimentation of the slaves. Though the plantation sizes varied, a rather general system for administration and organization was used.

Achille Murat described the system of management on large plantations where there were three classes of slaves: field hands, house servants, and skilled laborers. Murat was impressed by the efficiency of operation where "some hundreds of Negroes were collected together." He attributed this efficiency to proper discipline and police regulation. "A well-regulated plantation is truly a most interesting spectacle," he wrote. "All is governed in the most perfect order." The field hands began their work at sunrise with the sound of the horn as each was allotted his task for the day. At noon, time was allowed for lunch, after which work was resumed until three or four when the task was completed. The slave was now free to "cultivate his garden, hire himself to his master for extra labor, or take a stroll to visit his wife or mistress on some adjoining plantation." Each morning it was the duty of the overseer to assign the daily work for the slaves and, when the task was completed, to inspect the fields to see that the work had been done properly. At the end of the day, the owner rode his horse over the fields to inspect the day's work and to give any necessary instructions to his overseer for the next day. This schedule was performed with

2. "Grasses for the South," *Report of the Commissioner of Patents*, 1860, p. 226.

regularity. The work of house servants was not as regimented as that of slaves in the field, nor was their work as routine or strenuous. Murat observed that the slaves "residing in the *Great House* were treated in the same manner as the domestic servants in Europe. Generally they were born and bred up in the family, of which they considered themselves a part and to which they became much attached, and were very faithful."³

Skilled laborers on these large units, like house servants, were free from constant supervision and thus had enviable positions. Carpenters, blacksmiths, brickmasons, and others skilled in a trade were often hired out by the owner when not engaged in work on the plantation. They might be hired to another planter, to townspeople, or to a sawmill or other such industry needing labor. The system of hiring was an ever increasing activity within the slave labor system for house servants, field hands, and skilled laborers. Hiring meant income or interest on investment if, at a particular time, the slave was not engaged in labor on the owner's estate to produce this income. When owners allowed slaves to hire themselves out, it was with the understanding that 75 per cent or more of the hire be paid to the owner.⁴ This arrangement was most prevalent in urban areas and was frowned upon generally since it allowed the slave a degree of freedom, access to money, and, in time, the possibility of purchasing freedom. When the slave hired his own time, he could "choose his own employer, arrange his own hours, acquire a little money" and "so long as he made his payments to his master and kept out of the way of the police, he enjoyed a wide margin of liberty."⁵

Edward Bradford's two plantations, Pine Hill and Horseshoe, not far distant from one another north of Tallahassee in Leon County, serve as another example of large units under efficient management. Bradford owned more than a hundred slaves and was a successful cotton planter. He also operated a grist mill, sawmill, shingle mill, and brickyard. He employed an overseer to manage his labor force and four other white men, an engineer, miller, and sawyer to operate his mills and a bookkeeper to account for these various enter-

3. *America and the Americans*, pp. 80-81.

4. Leslie H. Fishel, Jr., and Benjamin Quarles, eds., *The Negro American: A Documentary History*, pp. 88-90.

5. Wade, *Slavery in the Cities*, p. 51; Murat, *America and the Americans*, p. 81.

prises. His skilled laborers included a blacksmith, three carpenters, three coopers, two wheelwrights, and other craftsmen. There were four slave foremen or drivers who supervised the field hands, and numerous house servants, including a butler, cooks, a housekeeper, housemaids, houseboys, laundresses, and seamstresses.⁶ Pine Hill was a large, self-sufficient plantation. There was much division of labor on an estate of this size; thus there were many necessary regulations which must be strictly enforced to insure successful operation and production.

Another type of plantation, described by Charles E. Whitehead, was the frontier unit, where the owner's relationship with his slaves was rather informal and there was little or no regulation. The owner of this unit was the uncultured "planter and cattle raiser" who cared less about planting a large cotton crop than living a life of ease. He was not of the "high-bred" society described by Solon Robinson in his travels in Florida, though his wealth in acreage and slaves was considerable.⁷ His home was a dilapidated, one-story structure, built several feet off the ground, "which left a pleasant abiding-place beneath for broods of young negroes that constantly lay in this novel kennel, looking out like young puppies." His slave quarters were "small one-room cabins, with a piazza extending across the whole front and open underneath. . . . Old negroes filled the porches" of these quarters, "looking happy and free, though they were all slaves."⁸

Many of the slaveholders in Florida were farmers who owned only a few bondsmen. On these small units, the slaves often worked alongside their owners in the field or under direct supervision of the owner without an overseer or driver to direct the work. Such was the case in Walton County, an area of small farms where there were few disciplinary problems among the slaves. The slave on the small farm had certain advantages over the slave on a large plantation where the owner was often an absentee landlord and complete responsibility was left to an overseer. In addition, his work was not as routine as that of plantation hands. He often

6. Eppes, *The Negro of the Old South*, pp. 103-6. Mrs. Eppes' story is a good general account, though not completely accurate, of the slave system on Pine Hill plantation. She recalled that her father, Edward Bradford, owned 300 slaves. The Leon County Tax Book for 1850 lists 105; Unpublished Census Returns for 1860 (Slave Rolls) list 143.

7. *The American Agriculturist* 10 (1851):148.

8. Whitehead, *Camp-Fires of the Everglades*, pp. 37-38.

ate from the same kitchen as the owner and developed a feeling of "family solidarity" with him. The slaves in Walton County attended church with their owners, sitting in segregated pews or galleries, as was the custom in the slave states.⁹

If any individual can be singled out as an object of hatred among plantation slaves, it was the overseer. The overseer was responsible for working the slaves and for disciplining and punishing them, so the resentment was natural; at times, it developed into real violence when slaves threatened to, and sometimes did, murder overseers. Slaves were frequently motivated to escape from the cruelty or harsh treatment of overseers by running away. Overseers have been characterized as an uneducated and uncouth class of people, sometimes inhumane in their treatment of slaves. Undoubtedly, many of them were, especially in the Lower South where a large floating population of amateur overseers, inexperienced and incapable of managing large groups of slaves, moved from one plantation to another at the end of each year. It was this group that contemporary writers described when they traveled in the Old South, thus creating a stereotyped image of the overseer.¹⁰ Overseers were not always of this class. Some were the sons of planters who acted as managers of the plantations for the valuable knowledge to be gained. William B. Nuttall, son of John Nuttall, acted as overseer on his father's plantation, El Destino, in Jefferson County, from 1828 to 1831.¹¹ Another kind of overseers were the professional managers of estates or plantations, experienced and responsible persons who directed the successful operation of estates and slaves for the owner. This last group often accumulated acreage and slaves for themselves, and some even moved into the planter class.¹² The primary concern of the overseer, though, was to produce a large crop for the owner, to make sure that the estate prospered. To this end, overseers were entrusted with estates running into hundreds of thousands of dollars. It is doubtful that the evil of slavery concerned them at all.

Most Florida planters took a personal interest in directing their

9. Williams, "Negro Slavery in Florida," pp. 192-93.

10. William K. Scarborough, *The Overseer; Plantation Management in the Old South*, pp. 98-101. Scarborough has re-examined the overseer and given him a new image. Instead of being consistently gross, the overseer was sometimes literate and articulate in expressing his views concerning agricultural reform.

11. Abbey, "Documents Relating to El Destino and Chemonie," pp. 182-83.

12. Scarborough, *The Overseer*, pp. 5-6.

overseers and in the management of their estates. Most resided on their plantations, though some had town homes in Marianna, Monticello, Quincy, and Tallahassee.¹³ Only in a few instances was the planter an absentee landlord, living in an older state, employing an overseer to manage his Florida plantation, and seldom if ever visiting it.¹⁴ Overseers were employed when holdings were large and more than one plantation was under operation, or when planters died and directed in their wills that overseers be employed to continue operation of the plantation. John W. Cotten of Leon County directed in his will, dated 1843, that "a first rate overseer be kept to superintend the plantation" and that "by all means" he must be "an honorable and honest and humane man."¹⁵

The planter usually stipulated in the contract with his overseer that a systematic journal be kept to show the daily routine of the plantation. Semiannually or yearly inventories giving amounts of equipment, stock, and supplies on hand were recorded in the overseer's journal. He also entered information concerning the slaves, such as clothing, births, deaths, marriages, physician's visits, and amounts of cotton picked. Farquhar Macrae, for example, sent a copy of his plantation journal to *The Farmers' Register* to show how efficiently and simply such a record could be kept. Macrae wrote:

I send you copy of a plantation journal which I have made and printed after my own experience. . . . You will observe that the journal is adapted for a period of one month and is intended to be bound in boards of twelve sheets for a volume—thus forming an authentic record annually of operations, and later serving as reference for seasons, crops, expenses, etc. I conceive that the simple and concise form of this sheet will enable any overseer to keep it correctly, as he will have nothing to do save fill up the heads, and columns—and when proprietors travel for the summers or reside off their plantations, the sheet neatly

13. Tax Books, Gadsden, Leon, and Jefferson counties.

14. Deed and Probate Records, Nuttall Papers, Carlton Smith Collection. After William B. Nuttall's death (c. 1832) George Jones owned Chemonie and El Destino, Nuttall's two Jefferson County plantations. Jones lived in Savannah, Georgia, and seldom visited his Florida plantations. He employed overseers to manage them. See Phillips and Glunt, *Florida Plantation Records*. This publication presents a detailed account of the overseer's responsibilities and activities. Also see Abbey, "Documents Relating to El Destino and Chemonie."

15. *Record of Wills*, Book A, pp. 82–84, Leon County.

folded, will as a letter, inform them of all the operations on the farm, and even its daily proceedings.

F. Macrae
Tallahassee, Florida ¹⁶

The plantation journal, a daily record of all activity and production on the plantation, furnishes invaluable material. It also records, better than any other source, the role of the overseer, his attitude toward the slaves, his capabilities and shortcomings, and his responsibilities as manager. The plantation journals of George Jones' overseers show the daily routine of slaves on Jones' two plantations, Chemonie and El Destino, in Jefferson County. John Evans was the overseer for Chemonie from 1847 to 1856. His entries were typical of those made by overseers and ran something like this:

June 23 1851. Rain hard, win S. E.
2 confined, Martha and L. Mariah
1 spinning, 2 to mill for meal
14 ploughing cotton in gin house field
14 hoeing cotton
1 sick, Ben Mungin
Give Jacob Flogging for telling lies

August 12, 1851. Fair and war, win north
2 Hawling leaves
2 sick, Fanny and Esaw
6 working in gin house
24 picking cotton, commenced this day
1 runaway, England

August 24, 1851. Unsettled wether, win S. W.
Given out to hands one weeks Rashings
All hands putting up fences win blew down
2 sick, O. Sucky and Juner
England brought holme by Mr. B. Hodges
I Floged him and put him back to driving

September 18, 1851. Cool morning, Windy, Win N. E.
2 hawling Fodder, 2 gining cotton
2 Sick, Juner and L. Marier
1 Makeing Coffin and Soforth
25 Picking Cotton, 1 child died today at ten o'clock (Amey),
2 children sick ¹⁷

16. *The Farmers' Register* 3 (1835):163.

17. Phillips and Glunt, *Florida Plantation Records*, pp. 340-416.

Though Evans frequently resorted to whippings, he penalized Jones' slaves in various other ways, such as sending a house servant to work in the field for having neglected her duties, or by placing a slave in solitary confinement on Sunday for misbehavior. Depriving the slave of his Sunday holiday by placing him in the so-called plantation jail was quite humiliating and an effective form of punishment. Evans also whipped the slaves working for him when they fought among themselves, injured their mules, or shirked their duties. Whippings were a matter of course upon the voluntary return or recapture of a runaway. When Evans left Chemonie in 1857, his name did not disappear from the plantation. Several mulatto children had been born to him by Mariah, one of the Chemonie slaves.¹⁸ Evans was overseer for George Jones for eight years, an unusual occurrence since the career of the overseer on any one plantation was usually short lived. Many overseers changed jobs at the end of a year.

The overseer for George Jones in 1854 on El Destino was D. N. Moxley. Frequent runaways and an attempt by one slave "who took an ax to him" to kill Moxley suggest that his punishments were severe. That his whippings were cruel and inhumane was attested by a local lawyer who examined the backs of four female slaves who escaped from the plantation and were caught in Tallahassee, where they were placed in jail. Moxley's whippings must have been unnecessarily harsh if the other overseer, Evans, would report to the owner that Moxley "put it on in two [*sic*] large doses" when he whipped the slaves. Evans thought moderate whippings the best: "Whenever I see I have convinced a negro I always turns [*sic*] him loose. I always punish according to the crime, if it is a large one I give him a genteel Flogging [*sic*] with a strop, [*sic*] about 75 lashes I think is a good Whipping. When picking cotton I never put on more than 20 stripes and Verry [*sic*] frequently not more than 10 or 15."¹⁹

The usual form of punishment was with the whip. The overseer's whip was designed to impose the penalty but not to injure the skin, since any disfiguration lowered the value of the slave. Even so, many whippings were so severely applied that permanent marks were left on the bodies of slaves. "Fancy whips to be used on black backs" were for sale at general merchandise stores. Some of these

18. *Ibid.*, pp. 24-27.

19. *Ibid.*, p. 111.

were advertised as "Ivory handled Planters' Whips, or ivory handled Twigs."²⁰

The whip was designed so that a certain number of lashes, properly administered, had the desired stinging effect without injuring the skin on the Negro's back. The whip was about three and a half feet long, tapering from the handle to the end. It was made of cord or leather, covered with plaited leather, with a soft buckskin cracker, about twelve inches long, attached to the end. Supposedly, the cracker was the only part of the whip that touched the bare skin of the slave's back. It made a sharp, cracking sound when used, stinging the skin but not bruising it. To receive the lashes, the slave must lie in a prone position on the ground with face down and arms outstretched. According to Dr. J. W. Monette of Mississippi, "one hundred stripes laid on with the proper whip would not injure the skin as much as ten moderate stripes with a cow-skin." Monette observed that whippings were "performed with as much care and humanity as the nature of the case will permit. . . . Very few planters would allow slaves to be whipped on the bare back with a raw-hide, or cow-skin, though, as in everything else, there is a difference in the degree of severity exercised by different masters."²¹

The greatest amount of cruelty and brutality existed on plantations where owners did not reside. Since many overseers were from the class of poor farmers, they often felt contempt for the slave, finding him responsible for their low economic status. The overseer was responsible for the management of the whole plantation in the absence of the landlord, so his authority was unlimited. Owners demanded that overseers get work out of slaves to produce a superior crop. In a system of slavery, little was accomplished without constant supervision. Slaves felt little compulsion to work unless forced, and so it was a natural recourse that overseers should seem ruthless and cruel in more or less degree, for only by using a certain amount of force could slaves be worked profitably.

To evade work, slaves often resorted to subterfuge. They frequently feigned illness, slowed down in their work, walked off

20. Sydnor, *Slavery in Mississippi*, pp. 87-88.

21. Joseph H. Ingraham, *The Southwest by a Yankee*, 2:287-88. From an appendix written by Dr. J. W. Monette of Mississippi. The slave was not always made to lie face down in a prone position to receive the lashes. The whipping post or a tree was also used, to which the slave would cling while being whipped. Another method was tying the slave's thumbs to a tree limb, allowing his toes to touch the ground while he was being whipped.

the plantation for a few days, or ran away thinking to escape permanently the routine of forced labor. A general belief was developed among slaveowners that Negroes were inferior and childlike as a race and should be treated and punished as children. Owners instructed overseers to give whippings when necessary and some owners specified the number of lashes to be given for certain offenses. Whippings were thought to be the most effective form of punishment. This method was sometimes flagrantly abused, accounting for the many runaways from overseers and planters.²²

Slaves did resist being enslaved. Acts of insubordination, such as running away, were motivated by the slave's desire to be with his family, to escape from the brutal treatment of overseer or owner, or to flee permanently from his bondage. His chances for successful escape from the deep South were remote, since he had to go many miles through slave states to reach a free state. The slave knew this, but the act itself, a compelling impulse to remove himself from the impositions forced upon him in bondage, could not be contained.

Frederick Law Olmsted tells of a slave who ran away repeatedly to escape the inhumane and cruel treatment of an owner, and how this owner used his dogs to catch the slave. The owner then "kept him in irons" until this "bad runaway" could be sold. "His niggers did not very often run away he said, because they found that he was almost sure to catch them. Sometimes they did manage to outwit the dogs, but then they almost always kept in the neighborhood, because they did not like to go where they could not sometimes get back and see their families. . . . Two months was the longest time any of them ever kept out. He had dogs trained on purpose to run after niggers, and never let out for anything else."²³

Florida newspapers for the period involved are filled with notices of "runaways." Notices always gave a description of the slave and offered a reward for his return: "\$50.00 reward—Ranaway from subscriber about last of March, negro man about 35, named Moses—about 5' 5" high, brown complexion, considerably bowlegged and

22. John Hope Franklin, *From Slavery to Freedom*, pp. 190-95. Franklin's account of the labor system on the plantation is not completely accurate. For a more balanced report, see Sellers, *Slavery in Alabama*, and Sydnor, *Slavery in Mississippi*.

23. *The Cotton Kingdom*, pp. 431-32.

TEN DOLLARS REWARD.



RAN AWAY from the subscriber, a *Negro man* named *Charles*, and a *Negro woman* named *Dorcas*. The man is about forty years old, and the woman thirty-eight. The man is very black—about five feet nine inches in height,—with the African marks on his face of his native country. The woman is about five feet nine inches, and rather thick set. Any person returning them shall receive the above reward.

HENRY W. MAXEY.

Cedar Point, March 4.

1w10

Advertisement for runaway slave (from the *Jacksonville Courier*,
April 16, 1835)

has very flat forehead; usually wears whiskers. No other marks. Above reward will be paid. H. J. Parramore.”²⁴ Another notice is titled “Catch the Runaway—\$50 Reward. Ranaway from the subscriber while on his way in moving from Leon County to South Florida, a likely negro man slave named Congo—he is about thirty-three years old—five and eleven inches high—stout and well built and rather quick spoken. He has since his escape been seen several times in Tallahassee. It is believed he is working in the area of Lake Amonia where the undersigned formally was. James R. Nicks.”²⁵

The position of the overseer was a difficult one. He did not have the prestige of the planter class, and the slave was the first to recognize this. The overseer had to demand a certain amount of respect for his authority, and this came from the whip. The slave could complain to the owner when he considered himself mistreated and he was sometimes upheld by the owner, but this did not lessen the contempt of the slave for the overseer or create any compassion on the part of the overseer for the slave. As the taskmaster, the overseer “was the symbol of the hardest features of slavery. It was the owner who was respected by the slave, but it was the overseer who had to absorb the bitterness of bondage as felt by the slave.”²⁶

The salaries of Florida overseers ranged from \$400 to \$800 annually and, after 1850, many overseers were paid \$1,000 or more a year. Receipts from the plantation records of William Bellamy's estate in Jefferson County show that the overseer was paid \$450 in 1843. For the year 1855, the overseer of Richard Harrison's plantation in Madison County was paid \$1,382.²⁷ Usually there was a written contract between owner and overseer stipulating the yearly salary to be paid and the nature of the work expected of the overseer; also there was usually a clause allowing the owner to terminate the contract at any time during the year if dissatisfied with the overseer. An overseer's contract between George Jones and Jesse W. Whatley for the year 1849 made these stipulations:

This agreement made and entered into this twenty-fourth day of December between George Jones and Jesse W. Whatley,

24. Tallahassee *Florida Sentinel*, September 2, 1851.

25. *Ibid.*, June 3, 1855.

26. William D. Postell, *The Health of Slaves on Southern Plantations*, pp. 22-26.

27. William Bellamy Estate Records, Steel File, pp. 33-43; Probate Records, Jefferson County, *Record Book of Annual Returns*, pp. 70, 104, 262.

stipulates that Jesse W. Whatley agrees to oversee and manage the plantation of the said George Jones, situated in Leon County, State of Florida, and known by the name of Chemonie, for and during the term of one year from date; that is, until the twenty fourth day of December, eighteen hundred and fifty, unless sooner discharged. To take care of the Negroes on said plantation in sickness and in health, and to treat them with humanity, to obey the lawful instructions of George Jones and generally to do and perform all acts usually required of a faithful overseer; and in consideration, George Jones agrees to pay Jesse W. Whatley at the end of the year, on the twenty-fourth day of December, the sum of four hundred dollars, or at the rate of thirty three dollars and thirty three cents a month, if the said George Jones should wish to terminate this agreement before the end of the year. George Jones agrees to furnish the said Jesse W. Whatley with a woman to cook and wash, corn and fodder for one horse, and bread and meat sufficient for his own use.

Jesse Whatley (SEAL)
George Jones (SEAL) ²⁸

Overseers' salaries were sometimes determined on a commission basis, the amount of salary determined by the total amount of cotton and other produce grown and sold from the plantation in a given year. When Reddin W. Parramore died in 1851, George Hammock managed his two plantations in Madison County for six years. Hammock's salary in 1853 was \$1,413; this reflected the net sales of cotton and other produce for the year, which amounted to \$10,217. Produce was often sold from one plantation to another. Entries on Parramore's estate inventory show amounts sold by Hammock: "Sold John Finlayson 10 bush. ground peas, \$12.50; Sold Good-bread 50 bush. corn, \$50.00; 1 bale wool due Sept. for A. M. & Co., \$88.63." ²⁹

Inventories made by George Hammock while he managed Reddin W. Parramore's estate for the family after the owner's death sug-

28. Phillips and Glunt, *Florida Plantation Records*, p. 578. Note that Jones refers to Chemonie in Leon County. The county line was later changed so that Chemonie was in Jefferson County.

29. *Record Book of Annual Returns*, pp. 70-72, 94-107, 192, 193, 240-55, Madison County. The total income of Parramore's estate in 1853 was \$16,756. The estate received \$4,234 in interest on notes due and other income from the firm of Thomas and Parramore located at Madison.

gest that he was a reliable manager and good businessman. Though overseers have been characterized as undesirable in many respects, there were some like George Hammock who were capable and served the planters' interests to the best of their ability. The fact that some planters had their sons work as overseers to gain valuable experience indicates that the overseer's profession was not held in scorn by some owners.³⁰ Occasionally, overseers became slave-owners. John Evans, mentioned earlier, owned several slaves in 1856. Slaveholding overseers are occasionally mentioned in plantation records.³¹

Advertisements placed in Florida newspapers by planters wanting to hire overseers usually stipulated that the owner desired a young man of good character. He had to be honest and sober, with good business sense and an understanding of the management of slaves. Most planters expected more of the overseer than the guarantee of a large cotton crop. The overseer must produce enough food on the plantation for animals and slaves. He must encourage the natural increase of the slaves, and he must continually improve the land and keep all equipment and livestock in good condition. More was expected of the overseer than the meagerness of his salary warranted. The demand for good overseers would not invariably have exceeded the supply had there been more economic attractions for the job.³²

The year-round routine of growing cotton is shown in the records which overseers kept, one practiced generally in Florida and other cotton belt areas. During January and February, any cotton remaining on the plants was picked, sunned, ginned, and packed for shipment; fields were cleaned, plowed, and prepared for spring planting. Planters who used fertilizer had it spread at this time. Wood was cut, hauled, and split for fence rails; logs were burned, fences repaired, and new ones built; buildings and tools were repaired; vegetables were planted.

During March and April, light furrows were made in corn and cotton fields, and seeds were planted and covered by hand with a harrow; vegetables were cultivated and cornfields plowed. In May, cotton was "barred." Barring off cotton or siding cotton was

30. Sellers, *Slavery in Alabama*, p. 50.

31. Phillips and Glunt, *Florida Plantation Records*, p. 26.

32. Tallahassee *Floridian*, 1829, 1835, 1845; Tallahassee *Floridian and Journal*, 1850-60; Marianna *Florida Whig*, 1847-52; *Southern Cultivator* 2 (August, 1844):123; Sellers, *Slavery in Alabama*, p. 51.

done by running single furrows with a one-horse turn-plow close alongside the rows of young cotton plants, throwing the earth to the "middles." This lessened the labor of the first "chopping." Chopping was followed by "splitting the middles," throwing the earth back again to the ridges on which the cotton plants stood. As cotton plants grew, cultivation was done with shallow plows, or "sweeps." Between May and August cotton and corn were cultivated until ready to be picked. The first picking of cotton began in August.

From September to January cotton was picked, ginned, pressed, and shipped to market. Teams of mules or oxen were used to haul the wagons of baled cotton to market. "Goading six or eight yoke of oxen all day and camping by night" while hauling cotton to market was "the winter routine" of many plantation slaves.³³ During the fall, peas were gathered, sweet potatoes were dug and stored in straw-lined mounds of earth called "banks," corn was gathered and shucked, fodder was stored, ditches cleaned and repaired, wood cut and hauled, and new ground cleared. Thus, one growing cycle overlapped the next. Though there was some variation from this general schedule, the work of cotton growers was essentially the same everywhere. The hoe and the plow were their basic tools.³⁴

On the sugar plantations in Florida, the year-round work routine for slaves was the same, though the production of cane required special techniques in planting, harvesting, and manufacturing the sugar. The Florida Peninsula lies below the thirtieth parallel of latitude and is well suited for cultivating sugarcane. The planter had from October to March to harvest his crop with seldom any danger of damaging frosts. This advantage allowed cane to come to full maturity and resulted in a better yield of juice. Juice from mature cane required less boiling for crystallization and resulted in a superior sugar.³⁵ The low-lying lands along stream beds were adaptable and desirable for cultivating sugarcane, as evidenced in a report made by Robert Gamble, Jr., to the Commissioner of Patents in 1851: "Being a sugar planter, I will confine myself to a description of that staple, its history and culture in this state. The cane has been brought from Georgia, having extended gradually south from the

33. Stamp, *The Peculiar Institution*, pp. 45-46.

34. The routine of growing cotton and other field activities of the plantation are generalized descriptions taken from several plantation record books.

35. *The Southern Cultivator* 18 (1856):269.

Carolinas, and becoming more developed as it approaches the tropics. I think, in consequence of annual maturity of our cane, its vitality is progressive; such is not the case in Louisiana. In South Florida, we find our canes will ratoon well for five years, but we should not ratoon longer than three, which, with the first, or plant crop, makes a term of four years between each planting. The sugar plantations are so recent, no planter has succeeded in getting a full crop. Our plantations will yield from 2000 to 3000 pounds of sugar to the acre. The cost of production will be from 1 to 1½ cents per pound.”³⁶

On the sugar plantations, seed cane was planted in early spring after fields were plowed and made ready. Seed cane made its stalks from sprouting at the joints. Cane was also ratooned from the root of the previous year’s planting. The first cane was cut in October, put aside, and covered with soil, or mulched, to be used as seed cane for the next year’s planting. From then until March, slaves harvested the cane, stripping, cutting, and hauling it to the sugar mill where it was fed through rollers which pressed out the juice into barrels.³⁷ From the barrels, the juice was emptied into large iron or copper kettles used for the boiling process. The kettles used in Gamble’s refinery each held six hundred gallons, giving some idea of the enormity of his refinery. As the juice boiled down, slaves “were in constant attendance over these seething kettles; with long-handled dippers, they stirred and skimmed the sacchariferous contents until each kettle had decreased its amount to less than fifty gallons. The thick syrup was then emptied into vats with porous bottoms through which the molasses seeped as the sugar cooled.”³⁸

There were many small sugar plantations in East Florida. Major Starke, owner of Spring Garden, a small unit in Orange County, stated in 1850 that his sugarcane, planted in 1846 on twelve acres of newly cleared land, was yielding an average of 2,500 pounds to the acre. Starke thought the “sugar country” in East Florida was as fine as any in the South. His cane was of superior quality; from twelve stalks “there were 6½ gallons of juice expressed, which stood by the saccharometer at 11½.” Starke’s cane crops required little attention; he used fifteen hands in his fields. Cane was cultivated in

36. *Report of the Commissioner of Patents* (1851), pp. 327–29.

37. *The Southern Cultivator* 18 (1856):269; J. Carlyle Sitterson, *Sugar Country: The Cane Sugar Industry in the South, 1753–1950*, pp. 112–56.

38. Lillie B. McDuffee, *The Lures of Manatee*, pp. 32–33, 44–45.

most of the counties throughout Florida, especially in the cotton belt, since sugar and molasses were used to supplement slave diets.³⁹

The daily routine of labor for field slaves began at dawn. The ringing of the bell or blowing of the horn was the signal to prepare for work. On Kidder Meade Moore's plantation in Jefferson County, the wagoner blew his bugle each morning at daybreak to assemble the hands, then awakened the owner, by knocking on his window, to receive orders for the day.⁴⁰ There was some variation on plantations in time and place scheduled for meals, though the pattern of general work was much the same. One slaveholder who managed his hands without an overseer worked them from daylight until noon, allowing them breakfast in the field "half an hour to an hour being given so that they could eat and work without being driven in and out." At noon, all hands left the field for lunch and rest, then returned to the field at two o'clock and remained until dark.⁴¹

Another owner had his slaves rise before daylight for breakfast in order to be in the field by sunup. He thought they were "more brisk" at work if they ate before going to the field. He had no objections to their whistling or singing some lively tune while at work, "but no drawling tunes were allowed in the field, for the motions of the Negroes were almost certain to keep time with the music." In winter, Negroes could be worked all day with only a short period for lunch and rest. As spring advanced and days grew longer and warmer, the noon hour was extended. Noon rest away from the hot summer sun to provide time for a nap was thought to be necessary for the health of field Negroes: in May, from one and a half to two hours; in June, two and a half; in July and August, three.⁴²

Even with rest, some collapsed of sunstroke during extreme heat. On El Destino, four female slaves fainted in the field one hot August day. Drinking water was always available to those doing field work. Sometimes a barrel on wheels was placed in a convenient place and

39. Tallahassee *Florida Sentinel*, March 12, 1850. Sugar averaged seven cents a pound between 1845 and 1860 (*Census Returns*, 1860).

40. McRory and Barrows, *History of Jefferson County*, p. 87.

41. De Bow, *Industrial Resources*, 2:336.

42. *Ibid.*, p. 337; Abbey, "Documents Relating to El Destino and Chemonie," p. 327. Slaves worked from sunrise to sunset, though the number of hours per day are not given. The standard of work depended upon the circumstances of climate.

Negro children, too young to work, filled buckets of water from the barrel to supply the hands. Some overseers insisted that Negroes carry a jug or large gourd full of water to the field every morning for drinking during the day. Olmsted observed field hands working on a Mississippi plantation during the heat of mid-summer and was impressed by their lethargical movements: "They are constantly and steadily driven up to their work, and the stupid, plodding, machine-like manner in which they labor, is painful to witness."⁴³

Planters agreed that slaves should not cook their own meals since the time involved in preparing food encroached upon the rest they should have, both at noon and at night. As one planter explained, "The cooking being done in a hurry, is badly done; being usually burnt on the outside while still raw within, and consequently unhealthy. However abundant may be the supply of vegetables, the hands have no time to cook them, and consequently are badly fed and have not the strength to do as much labor as they could otherwise perform with comfort." Breakfast and dinner were prepared in the kitchen or "cook house" by slave cooks, though the evening meal might be prepared by the slave family. This was not always allowed. The owner of one small unit explained that "the food is cooked by a woman, who has the children under her charge. I do not regard it as good economy, to say nothing of any feeling, to require negroes to do any cooking after their day's labor is over."⁴⁴

Most owners agreed that slaves should have a good supply of wood stacked near their cabins at all times so that when the day's labor was ended they were not forced to go looking for wood to build their fires. Hauling wood was a plantation routine. According to one planter, no humane person would require a Negro "after having done a heavy day's work, to toil for a quarter or a half mile under a load of wood before he could have a fire." Another planter explained: "The wood is regularly furnished them, for I hold it to be absolutely mean for a man to require a negro to work until daylight closes in, and then force him to get wood, sometimes half a mile off before he can get a fire, either to warm himself or cook his supper."⁴⁵

43. Phillips and Glunt, *Florida Plantation Records*, p. 90; De Bow, *Industrial Resources*, 2:336; Olmsted, *A Journey in the Back Country*, pp. 81-82.

44. De Bow, *Industrial Resources*, 2:331-33.

45. Ibid.; Phillips and Glunt, *Florida Plantation Records*; Abbey, "Documents Relating to El Destino and Chemonie." The overseers' journals show that wood was cut and hauled regularly.

A considerable division of occupation existed on large plantations. The primary division was made between house servants and field hands, and there was a further classification depending upon age, sex, and physical strength. For management of field labor, two rather well-defined arrangements existed: the "gang" and the "task" systems. The gang system had a leader or driver who set the pace, sometimes urging the Negro on with whip lashings. With the task system, the Negro was responsible for a certain amount of work in a given time. When the task was completed, whether it be field work or more specialized labor, the Negro was free to use his time as he wished.⁴⁶

An arrangement somewhere between the gang and task system was most often used, since the whole plantation functioned better when certain tasks were performed by Negroes more skilled in that particular work. The more skilled laborers were classified as blacksmiths, brickmasons, carpenters, cooks, ginwrights, seamstresses, shoemakers, and weavers, to distinguish them from field hands who were termed "axe hands," "hoe hands," and "plow hands." The positions demanding skilled labor were eagerly sought because of the distinction and because they involved partial or complete exemption from field labor. When cotton was ready to be picked all of the slaves were sent to the field to help. At other times the more skilled laborers performed their individual tasks.⁴⁷

Slaves who were worked in the field were separated into groups such as "hoe-gangs" and "plow-gangs." The former were led by a driver, the latter by a foreman. Drivers and foremen acted as petty officers and demanded a certain respect among Negroes, as did first-class hands. Drivers were responsible for forcing a certain amount of speed among the hoe gang. Under supervision of the driver, the "hoe squad moved like a machine with as much speed and precision as human arms could attain." The plow gang moved along with the natural gait of their mules. Olmsted observed twenty Negro women plowing in the field with double teams: "They were superintended by a male Negro foreman who carried a whip which he frequently cracked at them, permitting no dawdling or delay at the turning."⁴⁸

46. Gray, *History of Agriculture*, 1:548-51; Murat, *America and the Americans*, pp. 81-82.

47. Moore, *Agriculture in Ante-Bellum Mississippi*, p. 66; conversation with Edwin H. Finlayson, Ashville, Florida.

48. *The Cotton Kingdom*, pp. 430-31.

In plantation language, only "full hands" were assigned to the plow gangs, though some journals show listings of half hands and three-quarter hands. The hoe gang was made up of less strong field hands, some of them being rated as fractional hands and expected to perform only a fourth, a half, or three-fourths of the standard amount of work. These fractional hands were usually women classified as three-quarter hands, and children, from six to twelve years old, classified as half or quarter hands. Of the eighty-five slaves on Chemonie plantation in 1855, fifteen were classified as hoe hands and eighteen as plow hands. Of the hoe hands, five were half hands and two three-quarter hands. All of the plow hands were full hands.⁴⁹

Slaves too old to work in the field were assigned regular duties which took less physical effort. Old men worked as gardeners, wagoners, carters, and stock-tenders. Aged or infirm women were employed as hospital nurses, assistant cooks, workers in the dairy or poultry yard, caretakers of Negro children in the plantation nursery, or in sewing and repairing garments and in spinning and weaving.⁵⁰ The more skilled laborers such as blacksmiths, carpenters, house servants, seamstresses, and the like were all considered first-class hands. A caste system existed among slaves. The first-class hands considered themselves superior to the field hands. Among the Negroes Edward Bradford inherited and took to Florida were his house servants. They considered themselves part of the Bradford family and felt superior to Bradford's newer slaves, such as Fannie, a "boughton nigger," purchased as a house servant from a slave-trader in Tallahassee.⁵¹

The life of the house servants was more pleasant than that of the field hands. Their food was likely to be the same as their owners, and used clothing was often passed on to them by their owners. House servants sometimes learned to read and write because of their association with children of planters. Some traveled with their owners as personal servants and enjoyed advantages generally denied slaves in other categories. They copied the manners of their owners

49. Sellers, *Slavery in Alabama*, p. 66; Stamp, *The Peculiar Institution*, p. 80; Phillips and Glunt, *Florida Plantation Records*, p. 515.

50. Gray, *History of Agriculture*, 1:549; Phillips and Glunt, *Florida Plantation Records*. The daily routine work of slaves is recorded by the overseer of George Jones' two plantations, Chemonie and El Destino.

51. Eppes, *Negro of the Old South*, pp. 48-53.

and "took pride in having a master of wealth and high rank in society." The house servant considered himself far above the "corn field nigger."⁵²

Slaves were never worked on Sundays and on many plantations were given a half day off on Saturday. Christmas Day was always a holiday and this celebration was sometimes extended for several days or more through New Year's Day. Other days given throughout the year were the Fourth of July and after the crops were "laid by." The Chemonie plantation overseer, John Evans, recorded in his journal on Christmas Eve, 1851, that he "Give [*sic*] the hands two hours in the afternoon and gave them 2 lbs. of Pork a peace [*sic*] for Christmas." On Christmas Day Evans wrote: "Christmast, [*sic*] Noe [*sic*] work done Except tending to Stock." On December 28, which was Sunday, Evans wrote: "Last day of Holidays."⁵³

Kidder M. Moore's daughter recorded in her diary that "Christmas was always a big time on our plantation. The negroes were given a big dinner, and the table was spread under the oaks between the negro quarters and the big house. The men were called and given a dram and some money and the women were given clothes and shoes. On the Fourth of July the negroes were given another big dinner under the oaks." House servants on Moore's plantation included "three splendid cooks, Rachel, Mandy, and Tessie. They took turns about the cooking. Also two grown housemaids who kept the house, scoured the andirons and candle sticks and kept the walk swept in front of the house. When they finished the house duties they were required to sew or knit."⁵⁴

On Edward Bradford's Pine Hill plantation, Christmas was quite a festive occasion and celebrated for a full week. Preparations for Christmas began in the fall of the year when the cotton crop was moving to northern markets. Bradford's wife made her list of gifts to be purchased for "the black folks" at this time. When the list was completed, Bradford forwarded it to his commission merchants in New York. In due time, as the orders were filled, boxes of goods began to arrive in Tallahassee to be taken to the Bradford plantation. On Christmas day the Bradford slaves gathered around the "big house" to receive their gifts of clothing such as shawls, brightly

52. Sydnor, *Slavery in Mississippi*, p. 4; Franklin, *From Slavery to Freedom*, p. 191.

53. Phillips and Glunt, *Florida Plantation Records*, pp. 426-27.

54. McRory and Barrows, *History of Jefferson County*, pp. 86-87.

colored printed dresses and bandannas, new hats, Sunday shoes, or vests. The foremen on the plantation, "Alfred," "Ned," "Henry," and "Randall" received special gifts of overcoats and boots. Such was Christmas on the Bradford plantation, and quite different from Christmas on Chemonie where there was no celebration. The holiday was not ended for the Bradford slaves. All week was "kept," no chores being done except the necessary ones.⁵⁵

Second only in importance to Christmas as a holiday for slaves was the Fourth of July. This day was usually celebrated with a barbecue. The Pensacola and Georgia Railroad Company celebrated it in 1857 for the one hundred Negroes who were engaged in constructing the line. Mention was made of their Negro "Ben Myrick" who entertained the group with a speech "abounding in wit, genuine Negro mirth, and no small share of national spirit."⁵⁶ For the barbecue, pits were dug, then oak wood fires were made in the pits and allowed to burn down until only glowing coals remained. Green hickory poles were then strung across the tops of the pits and on these were laid whole dressed beeves and hogs. The mouths of the dressed animals were held open with large sweet potatoes.⁵⁷

Slave-hiring, though it was a restricted form of slave-trading and has been mentioned as such, also concerned slave labor. Slave-hiring throughout the South came into wide use because of labor shortages and the demand for labor by certain groups who were not slave-owners and by others who needed additional labor for a temporary period of time. A certain amount of prestige was involved in the ownership and hiring out of slaves. Slaves preferred to be hired rather than to be sold to an objectionable owner, though there were many undesirable conditions involved in the labor of hired slaves. The supply for hiring came from several sources. It was common for slaves from estates of deceased planters to be hired out as a source of income for the beneficiaries. Also, planters sometimes resorted to hiring because of crop failure or unfortunate managerial conditions on the plantation. Construction companies owning slaves often advertised them for hire when they were not being used.⁵⁸

55. Eppes, *Negro of the Old South*, pp. 7-13.

56. Tallahassee *Floridian and Journal*, July 11, 1857.

57. Eppes, *Negro of the Old South*, p. 13.

58. Inventories of estates showing types and rates of hire. Court records, Gadsden, Jackson, Jefferson, Hamilton, Hillsborough, Leon, Madison, and Marion counties.

The diary of James Gignilliat Cooper of Nassau County gives a day-by-day account of Cooper's management and hirings of his slaves: "December 27, 1857—I hired Frank, Jack and Jim to Captain Simpson at \$22.00 per month, allowed the boys \$2.00 per month. April 10, gave the negroes this day to plant their crops. July 14, Sunday, had court on riot and assault among slaves, Peter versus Henry. July 15, Monday, whipped Henry and Clarissa for riot and others for stealing watermelons out of the field. July 16, Tuesday, whipped Stephens for letting cows and calves get together. August 4, Margaret carried Amos' child, Icipio, to the plantation without leave. December 17, Tried to hire to Horace Vaughan my slave Frances, could not come it. Do not want any more *white negroes*." ⁵⁹

The importance of slave-hiring as a labor system is shown in the frequent references found in deed and probate records. Alexander A. Bellamy's will, dated 1834, provided that his brother, Edward C. Bellamy, act as guardian for his two sons, Richard and Alexander, and "hire out in common stocks for their mutual benefit until they come of age" certain slaves whose hire would bring the desired income necessary for their support. Accountings made regularly over the years show income received annually for the two beneficiaries. In 1852, thirteen slaves were hired to various persons and the total amount of income from hire for Richard and Alexander was \$1,075. In 1854, the hire of fifteen slaves brought \$2,013.⁶⁰ Rates of hire varied. There were more field hands hired in 1854 (and the value of slaves had risen), accounting for the increase in hire.

Hiring was by the day, month, or year. Thomas M. White, managing the estate of R. T. Jones for the years 1835–38, received for the estate in 1835 "for the hire of boy, Harry, to A. B. Blackwell, \$154"; "for Stephen and Venice, \$178." In 1837, the rates of hire for these same slaves increased to \$180 and \$197.25, respectively; also a slave, Clara, was hired by the month (the number of months is not given) for \$63. In 1838, the same Clara was hired to M. E. Pledzer from January 1 through May for \$47.42. The hire of Harry, Stephen, and Venice to A. B. Blackwell brought \$432.42. In 1839, the slave Harry was hired by the day for twenty days at \$1.75 per day. Harry may have hired himself out and then may have been

59. McDuffee, *Lures of Manatee*, p. 106, as quoted in McDuffee.

60. "Will of Alexander A. Bellamy," *Estate Book F*, p. 185, Jackson County; Alexander A. Bellamy File, Probate Records, Jackson County.

allowed to keep fifty cents of the hire per day since the entry showing his total hire for the twenty days is \$25 instead of \$35.⁶¹

Owners sometimes entrusted the business of hiring (or selling) their slaves to an attorney. In 1852, William W. Stallings gave Benjamin J. Heagler power of attorney to "hire to any person or persons, my three negro slaves; Nancy, a woman about fifty, Claracy, a woman about nineteen and George, a child of Claracy, about three."⁶² In 1858, Charles B. Winchester of New Orleans, formerly a merchant of Hillsborough County, directed that his attorney, Josiah B. Burkett of Tampa Bay, "sell or mortgage all the real estate, or all the slaves and personal property belonging to me in the said State of Florida . . . or to hire the slaves belonging to me and receive the wages due thereon."⁶³

Types of hire varied enormously, though the great majority of slaves were hired for use as household servants in cities and resorts, and as labor gangs for construction work such as building highways and railroads and digging canals. Some were employed in factories and mines and others were used by merchants, mechanics, livery stable men, and the like as helpers. Small-scale farmers who could not buy slaves hired them to help in the field. Unusual types of hire included the wet-nurse, the musician, and the steamboat pilot. The need for a wet-nurse was temporary, though not rare. The wet-nurse, though she had an infant of her own, could, "if buxom, spare one ample breast for the profit of her owner." A wet-nurse without a child was even more in demand: "There was no prejudice against having one's infant suckled by a slave, but the nourishing of white and black at the same fountain seemed like race equality and displeased many parents."⁶⁴

The usual period of hire was a year, beginning just after New Year's Day and ending just before Christmas, though some hirings were for a month, a week, or by the job. The place of hire might be near the county courthouse, at the crossroad store, or on the plantation. A written contract was required by the owner, manager, or agent, stipulating the rate of hire, the amount of clothing to be issued the Negro, and a guarantee that his health would be main-

61. *Record of Estates*, Book A, p. 128, Jackson County.

62. *Deed Records*, Book B, p. 5, Hillsborough County.

63. *Ibid.*, p. 924.

64. Bancroft, *Slave Trading*, pp. 145-54; Stamp, *The Peculiar Institution*, p. 84.

tained. An account of the hire of Negroes belonging to the estate of Dr. John B. Baker from January 4, 1841, to January 1, 1842, stipulated that the slaves were "each to have a hat, a blanket, 1 pair of shoes, one suit of woollen clothes, and a summer suit. They are not to go out of the County, nor to work on water. Notes and two good securities will be required." The above contract involved eighteen slaves and their total hire for the year was \$1,071. There were five among this group (four children and one elderly man) not capable of working. They went, with eight others, to Richard D. Rawls for the year.⁶⁵

There was a certain amount of personal tragedy involved in the system of hiring since the place of hire was sometimes far away from family and friends. Hired slaves were often overworked since the period of hire was temporary and there was little concern for the welfare of the Negro. Hardships endured by hired slaves encouraged them to run away. Advertisements for runaways suggest discontent and unhappiness of the slaves: "Ranaway from plantation of James Ormond, mulatto fellow. Was raised in Gadsden County where has wife and relatives." Another runaway, "Sandy," was trying to make his way to his wife: "Ranaway from my plantation a few weeks ago. He is strong and active, a good carriage driver, fiddler and dancer and pretends to be religious. Was seen a few days since near Gov. Call's plantation where he has a wife."⁶⁶

The individual or company hiring the slave had authority over and obligations to the slave for a temporary period of time. If punishment of the slave was excessive and injury resulted, the hirer was responsible to the owner for damages incurred. Under the contract with the owner, if the slave became ill, he received medical attention. The life of the hired slave was not an easy one. He did not have the security of the plantation or the protection of an owner concerned with his welfare. He was separated, temporarily and sometimes permanently, from those he loved, and the work demanded of him was often more strenuous than would have been demanded by his owner.

65. *Record of Estates*, Book A, p. 478, Jackson County.

66. *Florida Sentinel*, June 3, 1851; *Floridian and Journal*, January 15, 1859.

“To Render Slaves Profitable”

We wear the mask that grins and lies,
It hides our cheeks and shades our eyes,
This debt we pay to human guile;
With torn and bleeding hearts we smile,
And mouth with myriad subtleties.

We smile, but O great Christ, our cries
To Thee from tortured souls arise.
We sing, but oh, the clay is vile
Beneath our feet, and long the mile;
But let the world dream otherwise,
We wear the mask.¹

Frederick Douglass, the slave who escaped to the North to write as an abolitionist of his childhood on a Maryland plantation, told of the songs slaves sang to express their feelings against the dehumanizing character of slavery. Douglass was astonished “to find persons who could speak of the singing, among slaves, as evidence of their contentment and happiness. It is impossible to conceive of a greater mistake. Slaves sing most when they are most unhappy. The songs of the slave represent the sorrows of his heart; and he is relieved by them, only as an aching heart is relieved by its tears.”²

More meaningful and realistic than abolition literature are the attitudes and thoughts expressed in the *Slave Narratives*, a compilation of interviews with former slaves made during the 1930s. The narrative of Clayborn Gantling of Jacksonville, Florida, serves as an example. Gantling was born into slavery on a Georgia plantation

1. Paul Lawrence Dunbar, “We Wear the Mask,” *Dark Symphony; Negro Literature in America*, ed. James A. Emanuel and Theodore L. Cross, p. 41.

2. Benjamin Quarles, ed., *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*, pp. 36–38.

in 1848. He recalled the punishments of slaves to insure work: "A heap o' de slaves would run away and hide in de woods to keep from working so hard but the white folks to keep them from running away would put a chain around the neck which would hang down the back and be fastened on to another 'round the waist and another 'round the feet so they could not run; they had to work and sleep in 'em too; sometimes they would wear these chains for three or four months." He remembered seeing slaves "sold in droves like cows; they called 'em ruffigees, and white men wuz drivin' 'em like hogs and cows for sale. Mothers and fathers were sold and parted from their chillun; they wuz sold to white people in diffunt states. I have heard slaves morning and night pray for deliverance. Some of 'em would stand up in de field or bend over cotton and corn and pray out loud for God to help 'em and in time you see, He did." He also told of "nursing mothers who worked in the field and left their work at regular intervals to feed their infants."³

Ellen Long (a slaveholder's daughter) observed the slaves working on Fred R. Cotten's plantation north of Tallahassee. They were picking cotton in groups at different places in the fields while an overseer on horseback rode from one group to another. In one field near the quarters, women "sucklers" were picking cotton. They were working near the nursery to be able to feed their infants when necessary during the day. To Mrs. Long, they appeared to be merry and sang as they worked, one group pealing forth with a soul-stirring tune: "One was John the Baptist, some say he was a Jew, but the Holy Bible say he was a preacher too."⁴

Such a scene as this, portraying happiness and contentment of slaves, was a condition owners strove to create among their Negroes. In instructions to overseers, they frequently expressed concern for the well-being of their slaves. Their food and clothing must be adequate and their houses comfortable, and they must be cared for

3. "Florida Narratives," *Slave Narratives, A Folk History of Slavery in the United States from Interviews with Former Slaves*, 3:141-43. See "Florida Narratives" in Appendix A.

4. *Florida Breezes*, pp. 219-20. Ellen Long's history of Florida, like Susan Eppes', is not thought to be a reliable source. Both writers exaggerated and their descriptions are highly romantic. Fred R. Cotten did have a plantation north of Tallahassee and he was the largest slaveholder in Leon County in 1860 (254 slaves). Mrs. Long owned 61 and her father, Richard K. Call, 121, as shown in manuscript Census Returns for 1860. Mrs. Long's account of the women "sucklers" being near the nursery to feed their infants is probably true since this arrangement was a general practice.

in sickness and old age. As one owner explained, "To render slaves profitable, strict regard must be had to their health, comfort, and happiness; with these contributions, fidelity and usefulness will be the return under proper management." Owners were well aware of the importance of providing the necessities of life to insure profitable returns from investments in Negroes, and, more especially, to sustain a labor force. And so, if for no other reason, self-interest prompted most planters to see that their slaves were properly cared for. To provide them with adequate food and clothing was the first consideration.⁵

Though the food for Negroes varied somewhat from plantation to plantation, the chief staples of their diet were pork and corn meal. Provisions were issued once a week, on Saturday, Sunday, or Monday. At such time, three and a half to four pounds of pork and a peck of meal were provided each hand. Children ten years old or over received the same amount as adults. Molasses and sweet potatoes were often issued from time to time as supplemental foods.⁶ For the year 1851, the slaves on Chemonie plantation were issued weekly rations every Sunday, and, in 1855, every Saturday. Entries in the overseer's journal show that corn meal and pork were the weekly staples: for example, "Chesley and family" received three pecks of meal and six and a half pounds of meat, "Prophet, Joe and Cinder" three pecks of meal and seven pounds of meat, and other groups of Negroes received proportional amounts. The journal also shows that slaves were given supplemental foods from time to time to vary their basic diet. One such supplement mentioned by the overseer was an additional supply of meat: "I given [*sic*] a diner [*sic*] today, killed one sheep, 2 kidds [*sic*] 1 shoat."⁷

Not all planters agreed that three to four pounds of pork weekly constituted the proper diet for Negroes. One Floridian thought they should eat less pork, for "the sickliest families of negroes he had ever known were large and gross meat consumers." He observed that Negroes were healthier when fed less "fat meat" and more meal and sweet potatoes. The noted southern writer Dr. Samuel W. Cartwright, in his defense of slavery, declared that Negroes were like

5. *The American Cotton Planter* 1 (1853):351. Contemporary journals are filled with letters or reports from planters recommending the proper care and health for slaves.

6. De Bow, *Industrial Resources*, 2:333; *The Southern Cultivator* 2 (1853):223, 301.

7. Phillips and Glunt, *Florida Plantation Records*, pp. 508, 512.

children: "They require government in everything; food, clothing, exercise, sleep—all require to be prescribed by rule, or they will run into excesses. Like children, they are apt to overeat themselves, or to confine their diet too much to one favorite article, unless restrained from doing so. They often gorge themselves with fat meat, as children do with sugar." Actually, the diet thought to be healthful for Negroes was deficient in many ways. As a result, they were susceptible to numerous diseases and suffered a high mortality rate, especially the children.⁸

Negroes were allowed, and sometimes encouraged, to have small gardens near their cabins where they could grow greens and other vegetables for their own use. They kept chickens and hogs in small plots near the gardens. Slaves were not allowed to grow any corn or cotton which might be sold. It was believed that the possession of money was "calculated to generate bad habits and produce disorder where sobriety, good feelings and happiness should prevail."⁹ They were allowed to sell eggs, chickens, or produce from their gardens to persons away from the plantation. Achille Murat wrote that each slave had "his own poultry and pigs, cultivates his vegetables and sells them at the market."¹⁰ Solon Robinson observed that slaves on a Mississippi plantation often purchased "luxuries" with money from the sale of their chickens and eggs. In his report on the general condition of Negro slaves on Florida plantations, he gave a favorable description:

The situation on large plantations is similar to some of the old *Bible* patriarchs. The master lives in the big house surrounded by 30 or 40 small comfortable dwellings in which the slaves reside, with as much comfort as he does himself. On some plantations, ample provisions are cooked in one great kitchen to serve all the people. On others, where rations are dealt out, the almost universal allowance is 3 ½ pounds of fat pork and a peck and a half of fresh sweet corn meal per week to every working hand, male or female. . . . They have a great many vegetables from their own gardens. They always have chickens, eggs, and frequently crops and hogs of their own raising. Nowhere have I

8. *Florida Sentinel*, April 22, 1851; De Bow, *Industrial Resources*, 2:317; Unpublished Census Returns (Social Statistics), 1850, 1860.

9. *The Southern Cultivator* 2 (1853):223, 301.

10. *America and the Americans*, p. 80.

seen negroes hungry or starving. . . . Negroes are also comfortably clothed.¹¹

To insure the health of Negroes, their clothing was carefully supervised. At least three separate outfits of clothing and one pair of shoes a year were considered necessary. Some Negroes were furnished an additional outfit and two pairs of shoes, a "summer" and a "winter" pair. As one planter stated, "I give my negro men four full suits of clothes with two pair of shoes every year and to each of my negro women and girls, a calico dress and two handkerchiefs extra."¹² Olmsted reported that Negro men were usually furnished a coat and trousers made of kersey for winter wear, two pairs of shoes, three shirts, one blanket, and one felt hat. Field hands were required to wear woolen hats during winter and straw hats during summer as protection against the weather. Women were furnished two dresses of striped cotton, three shifts, and two pairs of shoes. Olmsted also noted that the women purchased clothing for themselves and were well supplied with handkerchiefs "which the men frequently, and the women nearly always, wear on their heads. On Sundays and holidays they usually look very smart, but when at work, very ragged and slovenly."¹³ Sunday dresses for women were usually of printed calico. One can imagine that female slaves were attractive and picturesque in these brightly colored dresses and head handkerchiefs. Mending or patching of Negro clothing was done by women on rainy days when they were compelled to stay indoors, or by "breeding women," when they became too heavy to work in the field.¹⁴

Kersey was a material of wool and cotton mixture and was preferred by many Florida planters for clothing for Negroes. Kersey and osnaberg were manufactured on Florida plantations, though the homemade material supplied only a portion of the cloth used. A

11. Tallahassee *Florida Sentinel*, February 12, 1850; Susan Bradford Eppes, *Through Some Eventful Years*, p. 32. Solon Robinson visited Edward Bradford's plantation in Leon County during the 1850s. Mrs. Eppes, Bradford's daughter, described Robinson as an "abolitionist of the most pronounced type," though Robinson made favorable reports concerning slavery as an institution, and thought slaves generally fared better than free white laborers.

12. De Bow, *Industrial Resources*, 2:332.

13. *The Cotton Kingdom*, p. 82.

14. De Bow, *Industrial Resources*, 2:336; Abbey, "Documents Relating to El Destino and Chemonie," pp. 292-325. The overseer frequently refers to "Negroes sewing" or "making Negro clothing" in his journal.

variety of materials purchased by planters may be found on ledger sheets of accounts kept by merchants. These materials varied in pattern and color. During the fall of 1856, the firm of I. T. Seegar in Quincy sold William E. Kilcrease quite a large amount of cloth for winter wear, 345 yards of "Columbus Stripes," 310 yards of "Marlboro Stripes," and 600 yards of osnaberg. During the spring, Kilcrease purchased yardage again in large amounts to be made into summer clothing for his slaves.¹⁵

Though Negro seamstresses made the clothing, the planter's wife supervised the work. Ellen Long observed that it was the planter's wife who was directly concerned with the general welfare of slaves on the plantation. Planters were country gentlemen. "Except riding over their crop and giving general orders to an overseer, the planter does little but read newspapers and talk politics. I sometimes visit my friends in the country, and I am appalled with the responsibility resting upon the wives oftentimes. The clothing of a plantation of negroes is in itself a great care; the cutting, fitting and sewing, by several seamstresses for both sex, must be superintended the year round, and when they weave the cloth, there is the carding, the spinning, the reeling, warping, etc., also to be directed."¹⁶

On Edward Bradford's plantation, the material for Negro clothing was cut out under the supervision of Bradford's wife, then taken in baskets by the eight seamstresses to be sewn into the finished garments. "This was repeated week after week, year in and year out." Calico slips were used to clothe Negro babies and white osnabergs were used for older children. Wednesday and Saturday afternoons were inspection times for the Negro children on Bradford's plantation. On these afternoons they were marched to "the great house" and duly inspected by the Bradford family. After inspection, pandemonium broke loose, since "each child wanted to show off his or her latest accomplishment. Some could 'drap a kurchy' or 'cut de pidgin whing'; others could sing songs and the larger boys could 'turn kart wheels.'" After inspection, "Aunt Dinah," who supervised these sixty-odd children, would take them back to the quarters.¹⁷

Not all slave children received such good care. In Hernando

15. "William E. Kilcrease Estate," *Inventories of Estates*, Gadsden County.

16. *Florida Breezes*, p. 179.

17. Eppes, *Negro of the Old South*, pp. 5-6.

County, an elderly resident remembered witnessing as a young girl "the feeding of small black children by a rather heartless overseer. Clabber or buttermilk was poured into long wooden troughs and the children, provided with wooden or pewter spoons, were turned loose to their feast while their mothers, side by side with the men, tilled the soil and cleared new grounds."¹⁸ On Kidder M. Moore's plantation in Jefferson County, the Negro children were well cared for. There were about thirty milch cows on the plantation and the extra milk was given to the slave children. "These children were kept in a house just outside of the yard and an old woman would come and get their food from the kitchen. The woman's name was Liddy, but everybody on the place called her 'Granny.'" ¹⁹

Sometimes clothing and materials for the Negroes were ordered through a commission merchant from one of the numerous dry goods houses which specialized in these items in New York, Rhode Island, New Orleans, and Mobile. An enormous variety was stocked by merchants specializing in Negro garments and fabrics. Clothing for women was classified as dresses, frocks, or shifts, and materials used to make them included calico, lindsey woolsey, cambric, domestic, linen, cotton, and woolen goods. Men's clothing included trousers, shirts, coats, and sometimes vests. A greater variety of materials was used for men's clothing. The list was long and included cassimere, cassinet, bombazett, corduroy, broadcloth, domestic, cottonade, Kentucky jeans, Lowell cotton, oznaburgs, plains, and French drilling, all varying in texture, color, and weave.²⁰

During the winter of 1848, thirty Negro men on George Jones' plantation were each issued six yards of "homemade" cloth to be made into shirts and pants. Negro women were issued the same amount of yardage of "northern" cloth. Another twenty-five women were issued "homemade" and "northern." Children received less material, averaging three to five yards each.²¹ Fabrics for Negro clothing not manufactured on the plantation were usually ordered in large quantity along with other supplies because it was profitable to purchase in bulk. An invoice of merchandise shipped to John B. Whitehead from New York lists "1 case Sheep's Grey Kerrys, 535

18. McDuffee, *Lures of Manatee*, p. 107.

19. McRory and Barrows, *History of Jefferson County*, p. 87.

20. Davis, *The Cotton Kingdom in Alabama*, p. 84; Sydnor, *Slavery in Mississippi*, p. 27; Olmsted, *A Journey in the Seaboard Slave States*, p. 697.

21. Phillips and Glunt, *Florida Plantation Records*, pp. 334-35.

yds. at 25 cts., \$133.75; 1,200 yds. Drills at 7 $\frac{3}{4}$ cts., \$93"; there was a discount of 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent for cash, and a marine insurance charge to St. Marks of \$3.75. The shipper included an explanation with the invoice:

John B. Whitehead Esq.

Dear Sir:

I send you herewith an invoice of Kerrys & Drills shipped by the Brig *Ocilla* for St. Marks. Amt. of invoice \$222.56 to the debit of the Estate of your decd. Father, as desired by you. These goods cost lower than formerly & I think you will find them of superior quality.

Resp. Your Ob. Svt.
for George Collins
F. G. Bull²²

Some planters preferred to use "lindsey" exclusively for their Negroes' winter dress. One explained, "In the winter time I purchase for them lindsey. The women have their frocks and capes, (I permit no one to come into the new ground that has not on lindsey, thus guarding against the effects of fire;) the men wear lindsey pants and full sack coats, the latter lined through and through with Lowells. Cleanliness is enjoined upon all, and all are required to appear in the field on Monday morning in proper trim. In addition to this, presents are made to the women of head handkerchiefs and Sunday dresses."²³

Accessories for Negroes such as shoes, hats, and blankets were usually purchased in large quantities, though sometimes shoes and blankets were made on the plantation. Negro cobblers on William J. Bailey's plantation turned out the rough, sturdy brogans worn by his slaves.²⁴ More often, shoes for slaves were supplied by merchants or manufacturers who advertised in local newspapers. James Ponder announced during the summer of 1851 that he would have a large supply by fall: "Gentlemen—I am making and will have on hand by the first of October next, some two thousand pair of NEGRO SHOES of a superior quality—double soled—and will warrant the

22. An invoice letter to John Whitehead, listing merchandise ordered from New York, dated 1845, Leon County.

23. *The Southern Cultivator* 2 (1853):223.

24. Conversation with Miss Virginia Mays, a descendent of William J. Bailey.

workmanship. You may hear that I will be undersold by other factories, but, gentlemen, do not believe it, for it is false. I will sell as low as any factory in the State, or adjoining it, who puts up such an article as I do.”²⁵

Shoes were issued in the fall, to be worn through winter. On Chemonie plantation in 1851, “winter shoes were given out on Oct. 30th.” Extra clothing was sometimes given at Christmas. William E. Kilcrease purchased thirteen pairs of “Russetts” (brogans) for his Negroes on December 22, 1856, at \$1.37 a pair, perhaps to be given out on Christmas Day. Shoes were worn until the following spring, or until they were no longer usable. On plantations where summer shoes were issued, they were given at this time. It was customary to go barefoot during summer months.²⁶ It is doubtful that slaves received more than one pair of shoes a year in Florida unless they were field hands.

Socks and underwear were not considered necessary apparel for slaves and generally were not furnished. In summer, Negroes were scantily clad—men wore only a shirt and pants, and women only a dress. During other seasons, attire included a jacket for men and a chemise or petticoat for women, and sometimes drawers. One owner thought it necessary for his female slaves who worked in the field “to have a change of drawers for winter in addition to their usual clothing.” Besides regular clothing, field hands were given blanket coats or wrappers to protect them from early morning dews as they picked cotton. A type of waterproof garment was sometimes devised since waterproof topcoats or raincoats were considered too expensive to be purchased as Negro clothing. One such device was a long apron with sleeves, “made of cotton osnaburgs, and coated with well boiled linseed oil.” In the fall, when hands were picking cotton, the apron was worn early in the morning to protect against the dew. It fit loosely and could also be used as a topcoat or raincoat.²⁷

Blankets were considered necessary for the slaves’ health and were issued at regular intervals, usually every other year. These were the only bedclothes furnished. One owner thought it was

25. *Florida Sentinel*, July 8, 1851.

26. Phillips and Glunt, *Florida Plantation Records*, p. 434; Sydnor, *Slavery in Mississippi*, p. 28; Postell, *The Health of Slaves on Southern Plantations*, p. 39; Inventory and Estate Records, Gadsden, Leon, Jefferson, and Madison counties.

27. De Bow, *Industrial Resources*, 2:334.

"folly to buy common blankets, such as sell for \$1 and \$1.25. They have but little warmth or durability. One that will cost double the money will do more than four times the service."²⁸ Good blankets sold for two dollars each. Quilts, blankets, and spreads were sometimes made by slaves on the plantation. The female slaves on Chemonie plantation were allowed to make quilts for themselves when they were not working in the field or engaged in other regular chores.²⁹ A durable, warm blanket could be made by sewing together "two breadths of lindsey, two and a half yards long, and lining it with Lowells."³⁰

No more clothing than thought to be absolutely necessary was issued the Negro. The cost of maintaining slave labor had to be kept at a minimal level to insure profits for the owner. Scholars have established the fact that food for Negroes was, in most instances, adequate and sufficient, as food was related to the output of work. Owners saw little connection between clothing and work, except as clothing served for protection against weather; slaves received only enough clothing to cover themselves, and often this was not sufficient. The materialistic nature of plantation slavery resulted in "little or no inclination to indulge in any expenditures for slaves that were viewed as unnecessary for increased productivity."³¹

As a rule, on the larger plantations, slaves lived in little villages called the "quarters" within sight of the overseer's cottage. Quarters, or housing for slaves, varied in construction and adequacy, depending on the area of settlement, size of the plantation, and efficiency and success of its management. On newer plantations in frontier regions, slave cabins were built of logs. The quarters on John Finlayson's plantation in Jefferson County were constructed of whole logs notched together at the corners, with pine straw and mud to close the cracks. The roofs were covered with wooden shingles and shutters were hung on the windows. The chimney, exterior to the house, was made of brick or, more frequently, of split sticks, laid horizontally and plastered with mud, and the fireplace opening inside was covered with clay. A few of these log houses can still be seen in Madison and Hamilton counties along the Withlacoochee River. Robert Gamble's slave quarters on the Manatee River were

28. Ibid.

29. Phillips and Glunt, *Florida Plantation Records*, pp. 419-21.

30. *The Southern Cultivator* 2 (1853):223.

31. Franklin, *From Slavery to Freedom*, p. 195.



A slave house made of logs



A slave house made of boards

low, small, one-room log cabins, and, while his mansion was being built, Gamble lived in a log house which was later occupied by his overseer.³²

When Achille Murat moved in 1825 from St. Augustine to the "primitive interior" of Middle Florida to develop a cotton plantation, his slaves, after clearing some land for planting, built a log house for Murat and smaller log cabins for themselves. The frontier was too new for refined living. "Settlers, both rich and poor, shared discomforts and prided themselves on their full measure of pioneer spirit." Murat slept on the floor of his log house on a moss mattress raised at the head by a pine log, and his slaves did likewise.³³

Contrary to the classic frontier sequence of Frederick Jackson Turner, the Florida plantation pattern, not unlike that of other states, reveals that the plantation and slavery were frontier institutions. The growth of one was dependent upon the growth of the other. The pattern of migration of owner and slaves to develop new lands in a wilderness was the same along the whole cotton frontier. Slaves were needed to clear the heavily timbered hammocks and dig out the stumps and roots of trees before fertile lands could be cultivated. Murat's migration to the forests of Middle Florida typifies the pattern of the early settler in his desire for new wealth. He moved to a wilderness with his slaves, cleared the woods and planted a field, built a log house, and enjoyed these primitive surroundings while planning to expand his holdings in acreage and slaves to become an established planter.

In time, log houses gave way to frame ones. The slave quarters on Edward Bradford's plantation were single frame units, each housing a family. They were whitewashed with brick chimneys, built well off the ground, with windows for ventilation and overhanging roofs to protect against rain.³⁴ Many slave quarters did not come up to these standards. An advertisement in a Tallahassee newspaper announcing the public sale of a plantation and seventy slaves in Madison County made mention of nine "good negro cabins" which meant seven or eight Negroes were crowded into each cabin.³⁵ The

32. Conversation with Edwin Finlayson, Jefferson County; observations made by the writer; McDuffee, *Lures of Manatee*, p. 44. See Olmsted, *The Cotton Kingdom*, p. 81, for a description of the construction of a typical slave cabin made of logs.

33. Hanna, *A Prince in Their Midst*, pp. 110-12.

34. Eppes, *Negro of the Old South*, p. 106.

35. Tallahassee *Floridian and Journal*, November 15, 1856.

meagerness of the slave quarters on El Destino is shown in a photograph of one still standing, though weathering and time may have contributed to its crude and delapidated appearance. It is a double unit, frame with shingle roof, approximately ten by twenty feet, making each unit ten by ten. It sits just off the ground and has one door, one window, and a chimney for each unit.³⁶

The ratio of slaves to slave houses on various Florida plantations is given in the slave schedules of the unpublished census returns for 1860, showing an average of five or more slaves in each cabin. For example, in Alachua County, Edward Haile had 20 Negro cabins for 100 slaves and David R. Williams had 25 cabins for 111 slaves. In Leon County, Fred R. Cotten had 48 cabins for 254 slaves and William H. Branch had 13 cabins for 56 slaves. In Jackson County, George W. Howard had 12 cabins for 70 slaves and the Reverend J. B. Owens had 18 cabins for 89 slaves.

Planters as a class were interested in the general welfare of their slaves, as shown by the many articles written by them and published in agricultural journals and newspapers. They invariably complained about the poor quality of Negro housing: "No attention is paid to ventilation and shading, nor anything else with reference to the health and comfort of the occupant. They are usually placed so near the ground that, in a few years, the lower timbers rot and sink down quite into the earth. But nothing better is provided and the negro is obliged to remain in this uncomfortable and unhealthy situation just as long as it will afford the nearest excuse for a shelter."³⁷

Another critic of substandard slave quarters wrote, "Servants confined to low, damp, close, badly ventilated quarters become enervated; and cannot stand the heavy dews and frosts, mud and rain, to which they are exposed. My servants are not crowded, and each family is separate to itself. My cabins, from 17 to 18 feet square, are built of logs hewed at the ends and scalped at the sides, are elevated say 18 inches above the ground, with rough plank floors, common dirt chimneys, covered with clapboards nailed on, lined on the inside with boards, with partial chinking and daubing on the north side. The cabins described will be considered by most planters as medium, that is to say, neither very good nor very bad."³⁸

36. Phillips and Glunt, *Florida Plantation Records*, p. 220.

37. *The Southern Cultivator* 14 (1856):17.

38. *Ibid.* 15-16 (1857-58):170-71.

Other buildings on the plantation, such as the nursery and hospital, were quite superior to slave cabins in construction and size. Proper care must be given infants, children, and sick slaves. Since the planter was especially interested in the increase of his slave population, expectant mothers, infants, and children received a sort of preferred treatment. When female slaves reported that they were pregnant, they were assigned lighter tasks or were exempt from labor so as not to bring about miscarriage, which meant the loss of a Negro baby who would mature in time, increasing in value all the while. It was generally agreed that the female slave, pregnant or not, should be relieved of strenuous tasks such as log-rolling and rail-splitting because such heavy work tended to "produce female disorders which rendered her barren . . . and a useless burden to her owner." It was also thought that "very careful management at and after confinement" was necessary "both for the safety of the mother as well as the child."³⁹

When a slave was in the last phase of her pregnancy and anticipating the birth of her child, she was placed in confinement in a "lying-in" room of the plantation hospital or, if the plantation did not have a hospital, in a separate building or cabin. A midwife or "granny" cared for her during confinement and often delivered the child. The midwife assisted in many births, delivering the Negro baby and also the white baby of the planter's wife. An accounting made by the firm of Isaac Widgeon, dated 1841, shows cash paid out by the firm for services of a midwife on Jacob Robinson's plantation: "Jan. 6, cash paid midwife for Molly, \$3.00; June 8, cash paid midwife to Peggy, \$3.00; Aug. 5, cash paid midwife to Jane, \$3.00; Oct. 17, cash paid midwife for Milley, \$3.00."⁴⁰ The role of the midwife in plantation life was quite prestigious. Because of her profession, she commanded a certain amount of esteem and respect among her peers. She took pride in her profession, as was expressed by one old "granny" who had been "'kotchin kids up and down dat holler for nearly half a century.'" ⁴¹

Careful attention was given the mother after childbirth. Generally, she remained in the hospital or cabin for four weeks before

39. Ibid. 15 (1857):170; Olmsted, *A Journey in the Seaboard Slave States*, p. 422; Postell, *The Health of Slaves*, pp. 112-15; Sydnor, *Slavery in Mississippi*, pp. 51-52; conversation with Edwin Finlayson, grandson of John Finlayson of Jefferson County.

40. *Record of Estates*, Book A, p. 608, Jackson County.

41. Postell, *The Health of Slaves*, p. 53, as quoted in Postell.

becoming active again, and for another two weeks she was assigned only light tasks. After this six-week period of confinement and convalescence, she returned to her daily routine of work but continued to nurse her infant for six to eight months. It was customary for all mothers to deposit their infants and children at the nursery before going to the field. Nursing mothers were assigned field chores near the nursery to facilitate returning to the nursery during the day to feed their infants.

A schedule established by one planter was rather typical of the routine for nursing mothers: "A large house is provided as a nursery for the children where all are taken at daylight and placed under the charge of a careful and experienced woman, whose sole occupation is to attend to them, and see that they are properly fed and attended to and above all things to keep them as dry and as cleanly as possible under the circumstances. The suckling women come in to nurse their children four times a day, and it is the duty of the nurse to see that they do not perform this duty until they have become properly cool after walking from the field. I have had more than thirty born within the last five years yet I have not lost a single one from teething, or the ordinary summer complaints so prevalent amongst the children in this climate."⁴²

The nursery was a solidly built structure, roomy and comfortable. On some plantations, it resembled the overseer's cottage and was often located in the quarters next to or near the overseer's cottage. The nursery on Horseshoe plantation was "a four-room house with a broad passage running north and south and wide piazzas all around; the rooms were well lighted; generous sized fireplaces heated them in winter and a 'lightwood blaze' could always be found there on chilly, rainy days in summer."⁴³

Supervised nursing of Negro infants and children was considered absolutely necessary. It was generally thought that Negro mothers were inadequate, that they were indifferent and felt little or no affection for their infants. Ellen Long thought they were "habitually careless and neglectful," and Susan Eppes thought "the maternal instinct in some of the Negro women seemed almost entirely lacking."⁴⁴ Keeping the slave mother away from her child all day (ex-

42. De Bow, *Industrial Resources*, 2:332.

43. Eppes, *Negro of the Old South*, p. 41. Also see Olmsted, *A Journey in the Seaboard Slave States*, p. 423, for a sketch of the nursery.

44. *Florida Breezes*, p. 180; *Negro of the Old South*, p. 41.

cept to feed infants), allowing her little or no responsibility for her child, and, at the same time, being critical of her apparent lack of love and concern for her child was certainly as inconsistent as any of the arguments propounded in the defense of slavery.

The pregnant mother received numerous "fringe benefits," such as exemption from labor, extra food and clothing, and certain comforts after childbirth. On some plantations, when a woman produced six to ten children she was exempt from all labor. These powerful stimuli offered to encourage prolificacy were all motivated by the owner's desire to increase his investments in slaves.⁴⁵ Immorality was encouraged and was indirectly sanctioned since great emphasis was placed upon propagating, and little or no concern was shown for the morals of slaves.

Cohabitation between owner and female slave was a frequent occurrence, especially if the owner was unmarried or a widower. The many mulatto and "yellow" slaves listed on manuscript census rolls attest to this. In his will, Frances J. Ross, a widower of Hamilton County, provided his slave mistress, Charlotte, and her family a house with 160 acres of land, livestock, plantation equipment, and three Negro slaves "for their use and enjoyment." He must have suspected that his legal heirs might protest such a provision, for he stipulated that they must relinquish in writing any right to the group of slaves for which he provided.⁴⁶

Fred R. Cotten directed in his will, dated 1843, that his estate be "equally divided between the living part of my family (white of course, and only white)." ⁴⁷ Achille Murat owned, among his slaves, a "pretty and gentle" fourteen-year-old mulatto girl, Mary, "who served her master in ways infrequently mentioned in polite society." In due time, Mary gave birth to Achille's child but then, in a tragic sequence of events, strangled the baby and died herself in the arms of Murat. Murat was impressed with the beauty of the mulatto women of New Orleans whose "colors ranged from ebony to the most delicate white." He thought the prettiest mulattoes were those whose color was "of clear *cafe au lait*." While in New Orleans, he chose a wealthy mulatto, Marcelline, as his "companion in adultery." Murat continued to have affairs with his female slaves

45. Gray, *History of Agriculture*, 2:663.

46. "The Will of Frances J. Ross," dated 1854, Probate Records, Hamilton County.

47. *Record of Wills*, Book A, pp. 82-84, Leon County.

even after his marriage to Catherine Dangerfield Willis Gray, a twenty-three-year-old widow from Virginia.⁴⁸

"To render slaves profitable" they must be kept contented and happy. Among the slaves on plantations of any size there was always a "fiddler." He was indispensable on Saturday nights when Negroes gathered together to dance and sing, though Negroes' songs certainly suggested an otherworldliness which may have been an expression of their discontent with this one. Such songs as "Dere's a Great Camp Meetin in de Promised Land, Look Away in de Heaven, Lord, Fo' My Soul's Goin' to Heaven Jes' Sho's You Born," and "Heaven, Heaven, Everybody Talkin' 'Bout Heaven Ain't Goin' There" suggest hope that they would eventually be relieved of their bondage.⁴⁹

Mention was often made of the fiddler on the plantation when owners told of how they managed their Negroes: "I must not omit to mention that I have a good fiddler, and keep well supplied with catgut, and I make it his duty to play for the negroes every Saturday night until twelve o'clock. They are exceedingly punctual in their attendance at the ball, while Charley's fiddle is always accompanied with Ihurod on the triangle, and Sam to 'pat.' " ⁵⁰

Religious instruction was also an emotional ingredient in keeping slaves contented and happy. There was no stronger argument to justify the system of slavery than the word of God, and planters regularly employed ministers to preach the gospel to their slaves. Slaves were not allowed to learn to read because knowledgeable slaves might not accept their state of bondage, but their owners wanted them to understand the Bible and Christian doctrine so that they would accept more fully their subjugation and state of obedience and submissiveness expected of them by all owners.⁵¹ As one owner explained, "It does not follow, either logically or in practice, that because slaves are not taught to read, they receive no valuable instruction. Various religious denominations take great pains to instruct slaves orally in the duties they owe their Creator, themselves and their masters." ⁵²

Employing ministers to preach to slaves was a general practice. If

48. Hanna, *A Prince in Their Midst*, pp. 90, 116, 123, 207.

49. Franklin, *From Slavery to Freedom*, p. 207.

50. De Bow, *Industrial Resources*, 2:332.

51. *Ibid.*

52. Tallahassee *Floridian and Journal*, July 10, 1858.

a church was not available, the planter's home was used. On William J. Bailey's plantation, a Methodist minister came regularly to preach. The service was held in two adjoining living rooms of the plantation mansion where Bailey's family and slaves gathered together to worship.⁵³ On Edward Bradford's plantation, a minister of the gospel was employed to preach every other Sunday to the slaves, alternating with a Negro slave preacher.⁵⁴ Perhaps the slave received emotional satisfaction through religious expression while the owner salved his conscience by reaffirming through the Scriptures his right to ownership of black "brothers." As a requirement for church membership, the slave had to be baptized. The overseer on George Jones' plantation reported that forty-one of Jones' slaves were baptized at one time on a Sunday afternoon. It was the largest gathering of Negroes the overseer had ever seen for such a purpose: "Davy and Polly and all the young set were baptised by James Page."⁵⁵

A group of planters often hired a minister to preach to the whole neighborhood. Richard Keith Call's daughter wrote, "It is important to look after the negro's morals; to instruct him religiously, which is done by hiring preachers. Neighborhoods unite in this, so that they have preaching and prayer meetings on one or the other plantation every Sunday. They are usually white men of the Methodist or Baptist persuasion, but they (the negro) prefer them to be of their own color."⁵⁶ Owners sometimes directed in their wills that their slaves have religious instruction. Emmala Bellamy stipulated in her will, dated 1851, that it was her "wish and desire that the Reverend Anderson Peeler should preach once or twice a month on Sabbath day to the negro slaves belonging to the estate of William Bellamy deceased and myself." William Bailey, Jr., directed in his will, dated 1862, that his executors "give annually not less than fifty dollars to a missionary of the Methodist Episcopal Church to preach the gospel and catechize my negroes."⁵⁷

The acceptance of Negro slaves into full membership was an interesting feature of many Florida churches. The Bethel Primitive

53. Conversation with Miss Virginia Mays at Lyndhurst, William J. Bailey's plantation in Jefferson County.

54. Eppes, *Negro of the Old South*, pp. 3-4.

55. Abbey, "Documents Relating to El Destino and Chemonie," p. 12.

56. Long, *Florida Breezes*, p. 180.

57. *Wills and Letters Testamentary*, Book B, pp. 34-36, 160, Jefferson County. Emmala Bellamy left many small legacies including five dollars each to certain of her slaves.

Baptist Church, founded at Jennings (Hamilton County) in 1846, had a membership of whites and Negro slaves. Church members were sometimes excommunicated for gossiping, excessive drinking, and immoral behavior. The church bylaws stipulated that "the Church shall, according to the Scriptures, call to account and deal with any member found guilty of backbiting, evil speaking, or any other transgressions spoken against the Scriptures."⁵⁸ By 1860, the Methodist Episcopal Church had 82 traveling preachers in its Florida Conference and 138 preachers at Methodist churches throughout the state. Church membership totaled 17,557; of the total, 7,777 were white members "in full connection," and 1,848 "on probation." Of the Negro slave membership, 6,224 were "in full connection," and 1,574 were "on probation."⁵⁹

In the mind of the planter, his slaves' physical well-being was as important as religious instruction. The more progressive planters had hospitals and dispensaries on their plantations to care for sick and ailing Negroes. Though hospitals varied in size, twenty by twenty-five feet was considered adequate to house three or four sick Negroes at a time. Hospitals were built well off the ground, with enough windows for proper ventilation and substantial fireplaces for adequate heat in winter. Mattresses on hospital beds were constructed of refuse cotton and corn shucks, as these were thought to be healthier and cheaper than feather mattresses.⁶⁰ Some planters kept an ambulance to transport sick Negroes to the hospital—one was listed among the plantation equipment belonging to John Finlayson.⁶¹

Lack of medical knowledge in the antebellum period handicapped doctors in their treatment of illness and disease. Practitioners, many of whom were quacks, competed with the doctors. In some instances, Negro slaves were practitioners and were consulted when the planter's doctor was unable to cure the patient. Negro practitioners used "home remedies," many of which possessed the ele-

58. The Bethel Primitive Baptist Church Records, 1846-1946, mss. at Bethel Primitive Baptist Church, Jennings.

59. Tallahassee *Floridian and Journal*, January 21, 1860.

60. *The Southern Cultivator* 14 (1856):17; 15-16 (1857-58):170-71.

61. *Letters Testamentary and Letters of Administration*, Book A, pp. 140-41, Jefferson County. See Abbey, "Documents Relating to El Destino and Chemonie," p. 311, for reference to the plantation hospital or infirmary. Sick Negroes were not allowed to remain in their cabins.

ment of magic and superstition.⁶² Superstitious slaves, to discourage evil spirits, sometimes slept with Bibles under their pillows or nailed horseshoes on their cabin doors. Delia, a slave on Richard K. Call's plantation, supposedly died of fetishism or conjury (the art of magic). She had grown up in Call's home with his children. According to Call's daughter, "there was very little difference in the treatment she received from that extended to my sisters and brothers. We ate the same food, we performed the same tasks, we learned to sew together, and she learned to read and write by listening and observing the white children of the family." Delia was eighteen when she became ill and died, despite frequent visits from a physician who could find nothing wrong with her. After her death, the slave practitioner on the plantation found a cloth package under Delia's mattress containing three rusty nails, a dog's tooth, some lamb's wool, and a ball of clay. The practitioner was certain that Delia had been "conjured," that the package under her mattress had killed her.⁶³

Concerning plantation hygiene and the proper care of Negro slaves, Dr. John M. Turner of Augusta, Georgia, advised planters to be more reluctant when treating their Negroes with "home remedies" that sometimes caused unnecessary suffering and still did not cure the patient. Turner wrote, "I have noticed planters . . . come every year to me to get a list of family supplies of medicine, and who kept their medicine-chest, and devoted much of their time to the perusal of Ewel's Medical Companion and Buchanan and Gann's Domestic Practice of Medicine, particularly in reference to the remedial treatment of their negroes; but who neglected in a lamentable manner to acquaint themselves with the *causes* of their maladies, an adequate knowledge of which would enable them to keep their hands in the field and avoid that solicitude always attending 'domestic treatment' and the subject themselves much unnecessary suffering."⁶⁴

Planters usually employed a physician, at an annual fee, to care for and treat their slaves. Dr. John G. Pettus, who cared for the Negroes on Abraham Bellamy's plantation in 1845, charged \$24.50 for twelve visits during the year.⁶⁵ Doctor John S. Bond, who cared

62. Postell, *The Health of Slaves*, p. 108.

63. Long, *Florida Breezes*, pp. 181-82.

64. *The Southern Cultivator* 15-16 (1857-58):140, 142.

65. Abraham Bellamy Estate, File 33-34, Jefferson County.

for the Negroes on Oscar Fillyaw's plantation, charged \$163.25 for twenty-three visits in 1852. This included prescriptions and mileage to and from the plantation. For night visits and bad weather he charged more. An interesting notation made by Bond on one of his bills to Fillyaw shows that twenty-five bushels of corn were accepted as part payment for the bill.⁶⁶

Doctors' visits and treatments included such services as extracting teeth, bleeding patients, administering iron and gentian pills and calomel and digitalis, delivering females in labor, dressing ulcers and blisters, and taking presents to Negro children.⁶⁷ If the doctor's bill was not paid at the end of the year, interest was charged, usually at a rate of 7 or 8 per cent. Doctor B. B. Burroughs' bill for visiting and treating the Negroes on James Whitehead's plantation for the year 1857 was not paid until January 1859. The total bill amounted to \$265.27, of which \$17.77 was interest charged. Burroughs charged from four to six dollars a visit, this including medicine, mileage, and treatment, and there was an additional fee during inclement weather. A typical entry on Burroughs' medical bill for treating Whitehead's Negroes reads, "Visit in rain, mileage and medicine to Henderson, \$5.50."⁶⁸

Physicians and planters were aware of the importance of cleanliness and proper hygiene in the prevention of illness. Slaves were instructed to bathe themselves regularly, and included in plantation routine was time set aside for washing clothes. They also had to clean their cabins at regular intervals, and the overseer inspected the cabins to see that they were swept and the floors scrubbed. Another caution against illness or disease was the practice of whitewashing cabins inside and out once a year. It was thought that the lime content in whitewash made cabins sanitary, and no doubt it did, temporarily. Overseers were also responsible for seeing that all filth and stagnant pools of water near the cabins were removed by raking and sweeping and by ditching or filling up low places. Wells were also cleaned regularly to insure the purity of drinking water.⁶⁹

66. Oscar Fillyaw Estate (no file number), Gadsden County; Edward Bradford Papers, 1830-71, mss., Florida State University Library, Tallahassee. Edward Bradford was a prominent physician as well as planter.

67. Henry Edward Palmer, "Physicians of Early Tallahassee and Vicinity," p. 38; medical bill from the William E. Kilcrease Estate File, Gadsden County; medical bill from the Francis J. Ross Estate File, Hamilton County.

68. Medical bill from the James Whitehead Estate Papers, File 290, Leon County.

69. *The Southern Cultivator* 15-16 (1857-58):140-42.

Even with all these precautions and the strict attention given to what was considered proper food and adequate clothing and shelter, slaves suffered "a good deal of sickness." Overseers frequently referred to sick slaves in their journals and in their letters to owners. The overseer for George Jones in 1852 wrote that there was sickness as usual: "Fillis, Niger & Jim Hall is sick at this time. William in Tallahassee has been verry sick. The forse is two small for the quantity of work they have to do and the worke is all heavy worke and from 3 to 5 generally sick." He wrote a year later that everything was going well except there was some sickness among the slaves: "Fillis has bin sick for the last 2 months and Tamer, Benty, Primus and Ben Wallis is sick at this time." In another letter to Jones that same year, the overseer wrote, "The hands is all well except Joe, he is sick and I have had sickness amongst the hands since my last letter, from 3 to 5 at a time but I doctored them up and has made no doctors bill except with Joe."⁷⁰

The mortality rate for Negro slaves in Florida was greater than that for whites. The diet thought to be healthful was deficient in many ways, and, as a result, Negroes were susceptible to many diseases. There was an especially high mortality rate among children. Of the 122 deaths in Leon County in 1850, 97 were Negro slaves. Of the Negro slaves who died, 62 were children of six years or younger. In Jefferson County there were 85 deaths, 51 of them Negro slaves; 33 of the Negroes were children. A similar ratio existed in other counties in Florida where there were large slave populations.⁷¹

Negroes died of "cholera, congestive fever, influenza, hives, consumption, inflammation, old age, miscarriage, debility, worms, cholic, apoplexy, croup, convulsions, liver complaint, lock jaw, whooping cough, diarrhea, dropsy," and other such ailments. Typhoid fever was the most fatal disease among Negroes in Madison County in 1860, and "cannon fever the most prevalent." Other Negroes died of "putrid sore throat, choking by worms, bowel consumption, paralicis [*sic*], womb disease, and inflammation of the brain."⁷²

Many of the illnesses, diseases, and deaths suffered by Negro

70. Abbey, "Documents Relating to El Destino and Chemonie," pp. 10-18.

71. Unpublished Census Returns (Social Statistics), 1850, 1860. Though slaves outnumbered whites by about three to one in Leon County, the ratio is still high.

72. *Ibid.*

slaves, and by whites, resulted from physicians' lack of proper medical knowledge. Bloodletting and violent purging, both of which were used frequently, probably caused the death, instead of recovery, of many slaves. Even some members of the medical profession questioned such severe treatment. A Georgia doctor thought it was a mistake to think Negroes could "bear almost any amount of puking, purging and bleeding. The fact is, excessive physicking is a very common error in domestic practice, both among whites and negroes, and thousands are thus hurried to the grave annually."⁷³ Medical science was in its infancy, and though many of the treatments seem archaic by modern standards, doctors, despite their shortcomings and scientific limitations, were as a rule sincere practitioners doing their best with a limited amount of knowledge.

73. *The American Cotton Planter* 3 (1859):228-29.

Slavery and the Law

Legally, slaves were chattels and existing laws did not apply to them. Gradually, laws were enacted in slave states to adjust penal codes to this "peculiar institution," and in Florida, these laws to regulate slaves were much the same as in other states where slaves were to be found in large numbers.¹ In 1824, the Legislative Council of Territorial Florida passed laws restricting a slave's activities.² No slave was allowed to carry or keep firearms or any other weapon; he was subject to thirty-nine lashes if such was found on his person or in his quarters. On Sunday, no slave was allowed to work on the plantation. Trading of articles was prohibited between slaves, except by consent of the owner or overseer. Slaves were not allowed to remain on plantations without the owner or overseer remaining also, and owners were subject to fines if guilty of this or if they had in their possession any slave who had been brought into the territory after having been convicted of an offense elsewhere.³

Additional restrictive laws were enacted in 1828. Slaves were not to be sold from one person to another except under certain conditions, and they could not leave the limits of the plantation without

1. De Bow, *Industrial Resources*, 2:269-92. An essay written by the Honorable J. B. O'Neill of South Carolina and printed by De Bow in 1850. The essay concerns the development of slave laws throughout the South, especially in South Carolina.

2. *Acts of the Legislative Council*, 1824, p. 291.

3. *Ibid.*; see Charles S. Sydnor, "The Southerner and the Laws."

written permission from the owner or overseer. The death penalty was prescribed for any slave found guilty of "administering poison . . . with intent to kill" or "maiming a free white person." If the slave was convicted of a felony not punishable by death, the law often subjected him to unusual and cruel treatment, such as having his hands burned with a heated iron, his ears nailed to posts, or a certain number of lashes by the whip, these penalties depending on the seriousness of the felony.⁴

The laws of 1828 also provided for a territorial tax of twenty-five cents on every slave between the ages of fifteen and fifty. In 1839, this tax was doubled. The Leon County tax on slaves appears to have been slightly less. As an example, in 1839, William Lester, who owned 32 slaves, 2,160 acres of land, and \$500 worth of pleasure carriages, paid a territorial tax of \$35 and a county tax of \$29, of which \$14 was the tax on slaves. If a planter resided outside of the territory as an absentee owner, and at the same time hired out his slaves to a local townsman or planter, a ten dollar tax was imposed on each slave so hired.⁵

Numerous rumors of slave insurrections throughout the whole plantation belt kept owners aware of this threat. In some instances, slaves did murder their masters. The best known of these cases occurred in 1831, when a group of slaves killed about fifty-five whites in Virginia, during the Nat Turner Insurrection. To prevent a repetition, police patrols were introduced throughout the South. The patrol system in Florida consisted of groups of men from a neighborhood who volunteered to search slaves and their quarters at regular intervals to make sure that restrictions established by law were being enforced.⁶ In Florida, as elsewhere in the South, it was necessary that the slave system be supported by statutory law to protect the interests of the owner as well as the vast agricultural economy which was the mainstay of the cotton belt. Only in a small measure did the law protect the slave: owners were required to treat slaves with humanity and to provide them with necessary clothing, food, housing, and medical care. The territorial laws of Florida supposedly protected the slave from unduly harsh treatment. An interesting example is the case against Thomas Gaskin, overseer, for "unlawfully,

4. Thelma Bates, "A Preliminary Study of the Legal Status of the Negro in Florida," pp. 4, 7.

5. *Ibid.*, pp. 6, 8; Tax Book, 1839, Leon County.

6. Bates, "Legal Status," p. 7.

willfully, knowingly and maliciously . . . with a heavy and large stick of wood, cruelly beating the slave and fracturing the bone."⁷ Though this case was dismissed, persons convicted of extreme cruelty to slaves were subject to a \$500 fine. Money received from this source was paid into the territorial treasury to be used as an educational fund.⁸

Slaves accused of crimes were tried in the territorial court and, after 1845, the state court of Tallahassee. Court proceedings under the law were the same for slaves as for free persons, but the trials were different. In only two instances was the Negro allowed to give testimony as a witness: when the territory or the state issued a suit against persons or concerns, and, in civil cases between Negroes and mulattoes, where no white persons were involved. Before the slave appeared as a witness he was usually threatened with punishment to make sure he testified truthfully. These restrictions quite probably resulted in many unfair trials.⁹

When a slave was absent from his quarters and his whereabouts not known, he was termed a "runaway." The owner immediately gave notice to an officer of the peace and steps were taken to apprehend the slave. Runaway slaves, when found, were held in the nearest county jail until owners claimed them, at such time paying a five dollar fee to the person who apprehended the runaway and any other reasonable costs and charges. Whippings were the usual form of punishment when runaway slaves were returned.¹⁰

To help locate runaway slaves, advertisements giving full descriptions were printed in the newspapers. Joseph Chaires, who operated the plantations of Benjamin Chaires, deceased, advertised in the *Apalachicola Gazette* in 1839, offering a \$200 reward to anyone finding his two slaves Will and Paul, who had escaped: "Will is about twenty years of age, five feet, six or eight inches high, of a dark color, and weighs about one hundred and sixty pounds, and stammers in his speech. Paul is about 24 years of age, 5 feet, 8 or 10 inches high, very dark complexion, has a scar commencing on the lower part of the ear, on one of his cheeks, and a scar on his left breast, and a downcast look, when spoken to. Said Negroes are sup-

7. A suit against Thomas Gaskin, November 7, 1830, Leon County.

8. Bates, "Legal Status," p. 9.

9. *Ibid.*, p. 6.

10. Gray, *History of Agriculture*, 1:515; Olmsted, *The Cotton Kingdom*, p.

posed to be on St. Vincents Island, or harbored in the vicinity of St. Joseph or Apalachicola.”¹¹

Hesikiah Worlers, an Alabama planter, advertised in a Florida newspaper, offering a fifty dollar reward to anyone finding his two slaves Joe and Abeline, who were thought to be in the area: “Runaway from the subscriber on or about the 25th of June last, one negro man and his wife; the man is about 35 years old, 5’ 7” high, yellow complexion, considerably scarified by the smallpox. It is thought he may have free papers. The boy once belonged to Judge McComb of Tallahassee. The woman is of ordinary size, tolerable [*sic*] black, with a mole on cheek near the nose, with some fore teeth out before, and is about 32. Fifty dollars will be given for the apprehension of the said boy, Joe, and his wife, Abeline, in any safe jail, so that I can get them.”¹²

In 1850, A. A. Fisher offered a \$250 reward to anyone finding his slave Wyatt: “Runaway or stolen from the subscriber, on night of 23rd, my boy Wyatt, about 20 or 21, Mulatto complexion, about 5’ 11”, intelligent spoken, bright and quick with somewhat appearance of Indian with straight, slick, black hair. Is remarkable for smiling when spoken to. I will give \$50 for recovery of the boy, and \$200 for the thief if stolen.”¹³

A noted southern doctor, writing about the diseases of Negroes in 1850, classified running away as “drapetomania,” and thought the only cure for the disease was to treat slaves kindly, “keep them well fed and clothed, and separated into families, not permitting them to run about at night to visit neighbors, to receive visits, or to use intoxicating liquors.” If at any time they were inclined to “raise their heads to a level with their master or overseer, they must be punished until they fall into that submissive state intended for them to occupy, known as submissive knee bending.” It was generally thought that slaves need only be kept in a state of submission and treated like children to prevent their running away.¹⁴

Occasionally, slaves refused to remain in a state of submission and revolted against owners who treated them cruelly. William Pierce, a slaveowner in Madison County, preparing to administer a whipping, was suddenly attacked when his slave, “while manifesting a

11. *Apalachicola Gazette*, February 2, 1839.

12. *Tallahassee Florida Sentinel*, July 15, 1851.

13. *Ibid.*, November 25, 1851.

14. De Bow, *Industrial Resources*, 2:322-23.

great deal of submission, came forward, drew an axe which he had concealed, and split in twain the head of his master, scattering the brains in every direction.”¹⁵ In another instance, Dr. W. G. Keith of Marion County was murdered by two slaves, who were promptly hanged.¹⁶

“Negro stealers,” or persons who abducted slaves, were thought of as despicable characters and were looked down upon by all. When they were apprehended, their punishment varied in degree of intensity. In 1848, a “large nest of Negro stealers” was discovered near Tallahassee. The men were caught, convicted, and hanged.¹⁷ In 1851, John Pierce, who was found guilty of stealing William Wyatt’s slave Jack, worth \$500, was sentenced to thirty-nine lashes.¹⁸

To prevent the escape of runaways from the state and to discourage abductions, laws were introduced to insure more complete control of slaves. Undoubtedly, a few slaves escaped from Florida by traveling east along the St. Johns River to Jacksonville, where they boarded a vessel heading for a northern port. In 1854 an act was passed to provide for the regulation of vessels in the St. Johns River area and to insure a more diligent search for runaway slaves. Ship captains or other persons in charge of vessels, before putting out to sea, must now anchor “opposite May Port Mills and there remain a sufficient length of time to be boarded and searched.” Any slave found on board without written permission from owner or overseer was taken into custody and placed in jail at Jacksonville. Under the same law, the captain or owner of the vessel was forced to pay any expenses connected with removing slaves and placing them in jail when they were thought to be escapees. Any captain or owner who failed to comply with the regulations, or hindered the searching officer in any way, was subject to a fine of \$500 to \$2,000. The searching officer kept a permanent record of each vessel arriving in and leaving Jacksonville and received \$2.50 for each ship boarded and searched. This fee was paid by the captain or owner of the ship.¹⁹

Under another regulation, any person found guilty of encourag-

15. Tallahassee *Floridian and Journal*, November 8, 1856.

16. Unpublished Census Returns (Social Statistics), 1860.

17. *Niles' Weekly Register* 71 (1848):122.

18. A suit filed against John Pierce, 1831, ms., Florida State Library.

19. An act to prevent the abduction and escape of slaves from Florida, dated December 29, 1854, ms., Secretary of State’s Office, Tallahassee.

ing slaves to run away was subject to imprisonment of three to twelve months or thirty-nine lashes "on their bare backs, at the discretion of the Court."²⁰ Occasionally "runaway" slaves did make good their flight from Florida. In 1854, twelve slaves escaped by boat from Key West to Andros Island in the Bahama Islands. The group of men, women, and children traveled in a small, open boat which they had stolen from the lighthouse keeper at Key West. A free Negro, familiar with the waters in and around the West Indies, piloted them to the Bahamas. The American consul at Andros Island, "not wanting to interfere with any proceedings which the owner of the fugitives might take against them, refused to take charge of the boat." The arrival at Andros Island of this boatload of runaway slaves created much excitement.²¹

Owners sometimes moved mortgaged slaves to another state rather than forfeit them when unable to make payments on notes due. Bryan Hines and Burney Smith moved 65 slaves, valued at \$71,400, from Greene County, Alabama, to Florida in 1846. These slaves were mortgaged to the Alabama State Bank and, as such, were property of the bank. Hines was eventually caught in Florida and taken back to Alabama for prosecution (and perhaps execution), but Smith was never apprehended. The Negroes, as mortgaged property, were returned to their lawful owner, the Alabama State Bank.²² In another instance, a group of Negro slaves was unlawfully removed from Florida. In 1852, Joseph B. Watts complained in a letter to Governor Thomas Brown that twenty Negroes in Madison County, on whom he had a claim, were taken to South Carolina, North Carolina, and Virginia by Thomas Clordey before he could get possession of them.²³

It was unlawful for anyone to sell whiskey to slaves. In 1850, Thomas Friesby was indicted for selling whiskey to slaves in Pensacola, was found guilty, and was sentenced to thirty days imprisonment. While being taken to jail by two bailiffs, he escaped and got as far as Mobile, Alabama, where he was again arrested and re-

20. An act to prevent persons from attempting to entice or steal Negroes, dated January 12, 1855, ms., Secretary of State's Office, Tallahassee.

21. Tallahassee *Floridian and Journal*, March 20, 1858.

22. An indictment against Bryan Hines and Burney Smith by the State of Alabama, dated August 13, 1846, ms., Secretary of State's Office, Tallahassee.

23. A letter to Governor Thomas Brown, dated February 17, 1852, ms., Secretary of State's Office, Tallahassee.

turned to the Escambia County Jail to serve his term.²⁴ In 1860, Henry Rukan, a Pensacola merchant, was fined \$100 and court costs for selling whiskey to a slave. In Rukan's case, the fine was rescinded when his friends sent a petition to Governor Madison S. Perry in his behalf.²⁵ In 1860, another merchant, Thomas Patterson, was convicted for selling whiskey in Duval County to "free persons of color" and for selling without a license. His fine was \$158.²⁶

During the 1850s there was legislative action to discourage immorality and fraternization between Negroes and whites in Florida. In 1855, a bill was introduced in the Florida legislature stipulating that all white female and male residents "who shall live in an open state of adultery . . . with any Negro, mullatto [*sic*], quarteroon [*sic*], or other colored male or female, shall be liable to indictment, and on conviction, shall be fined five hundred dollars or imprisonment, not exceeding three months, at the discretion of the Court." This bill passed the House of Representatives but was postponed indefinitely in the Senate and never became law.²⁷

Gradually, the laws in Florida regulating Negro slaves, and the small percentage of Negroes classified as free persons of color, became more restrictive, especially after 1850, as southerners became increasingly fearful of the abolitionists. Restrictive city ordinances were issued in Apalachicola, Pensacola, and St. Augustine concerning Negroes in those areas. Threats of slave insurrections created periodic scares, bringing a flood of bills to the Florida legislature. These bills were designed to tighten the restrictive measures already in effect and to keep abolition propaganda from the Negro.

In 1849, a city ordinance issued at Apalachicola subjected to a five dollar fine all owners who permitted their slaves to reside in the city without a white person as owner, or agent for the owner, residing there also. The ordinance encouraged informers by giving them half of the fine. The same ordinance made it illegal for any owner to hire out a slave, the penalty for this offense being one

24. A letter to Governor Thomas Brown, dated December 20, 1850, ms., Secretary of State's Office, Tallahassee.

25. A petition to Governor Madison S. Perry from the citizens of Pensacola, dated December 26, 1860, ms., Secretary of State's Office, Tallahassee.

26. A petition to Governor Madison S. Perry from the citizens of Duval County, ms., Secretary of State's Office, Tallahassee.

27. A bill to prevent white females and males from living in an open state of adultery . . . with Negroes and other persons of color, dated January 6, 1855, ms., Secretary of State's Office, Tallahassee.

hundred dollars, a fourth of which went to the informer. Owners were also required to pay a five dollar license fee for each slave they had working in the city as porters, laundresses, or public laborers in any other capacity. The license entitled the owner to a badge with a number which the slave wore in a conspicuous place. Owners not complying with this section of the ordinance were subject to a ten dollar fine.²⁸

In 1850, a bill was introduced by the Florida legislature to discourage the continuous stream of slaves being brought into Florida (and into Alabama, Mississippi, and Texas) from the slave states of the upper South: "The constant emigration of slaves from the Southern States bordering on the free states is slowly but surely tending to weaken the interest of those states in the institution of Slavery, and if not checked, will inevitably result in the gradual abolition of slavery in such states." The bill was designed to prohibit the sale in Florida of slaves brought from the older states. The sponsors of this bill recommended that all southern states adopt a policy that would "confine the present slave population within the limits of the respective states in which slavery now exists for the preservation of the interests of the whole Southern states." Though it passed the House, it was rejected in the Senate, and never became law.²⁹

Threats of slave insurrections, publicized in newspapers, created anxiety among southerners. In 1850, the threat of insurrection in Lowndes County, Alabama, appeared in a Tallahassee newspaper: "The *Columbus Times* says: A telegraphic dispatch from Montgomery brings us intelligence of a negro insurrection in Lowndes County, Alabama. Some 400 blacks met together with hostile intentions. They were discovered, attacked, and fired on by whites. One negro was killed, some twenty wounded, and a large number taken prisoners. These are but links in the chain of passing events. We are informed that the insurrection was excited by a white man from New York. He has been pursued by several citizens who have hopes of overtaking him before he reaches a free state. A number of the negroes engaged in the affair have run off and large rewards are being offered for them."³⁰

28. *Apalachicola Commercial Advertiser*, March 1, 1849.

29. An act to prohibit the introduction of slaves into Florida for sale, dated January 24, 1851, ms., Secretary of State's Office, Tallahassee.

30. *Tallahassee Floridian and Journal*, August 31, 1850.

In 1850, the legislature passed an act making it unlawful for non-residents to bring their Negroes into Florida for hire. Owners not complying with the law were subject to a fifty dollar fine and the sheriff was entitled to five dollars for each arrest of such a slave. If the owner did not come forth within ten days to claim the property, the sheriff advertised and sold the slave, collecting his fee for keeping and selling the slave from the proceeds of the sale. The remainder was turned over to the owner if he appeared and called for the money; if he did not, the money was kept by the county in which the arrest was made.³¹

An act was passed in 1854 to prevent slaves in the city of St. Augustine from hiring out their own time. Any owner who permitted his slave to hire his own time, or to travel about the city, "trading as a freeman or free woman," was subject to a fine of fifty dollars.³² Persons who owned vessels and whose occupation was piloting on the St. Johns River petitioned the General Assembly in 1854 to enact a law prohibiting Negroes from being employed as pilots. A law was already in force that prohibited Negroes from becoming masters or captains of vessels. The petitioners complained that Negroes employed as pilots threatened the livelihood of the white pilots.³³

In 1856, an act was passed prohibiting any owner in Florida from allowing his Negroes to hire out on their own time. The act also prohibited free Negroes, whether mulatto or black, from having any firearms in their possession. Another section of the act was designed to discourage the presence of free Negroes and mulattoes in the state by stipulating that any slave who had wholly, or in part, purchased his or her freedom and remained in the state for more than thirty days thereafter would be taken into custody and sold by the sheriff at public outcry.³⁴

As the political tension between North and South grew, legislative action was taken in Florida (as in other southern states) to prevent insubordination of any nature among Negroes and to pro-

31. An act to prevent the introduction of Negroes into Florida for hire, December 27, 1850, ms., Secretary of State's Office, Tallahassee.

32. An act to prevent slaves in St. Augustine from hiring their own time, 1856, ms., Secretary of State's Office, Tallahassee.

33. A petition to prohibit Negroes from piloting on the St. Johns River, 1845, ms., Secretary of State's Office, Tallahassee.

34. An act to prevent slaves from hiring their own time, dated December 22, 1856, ms., Secretary of State's Office, Tallahassee.

hibit the circulation of literature which might be tainted with abolition doctrine. The act of 1828 defining insubordination was enlarged in 1857 to forbid any person to teach a slave to read or write. If a white person was guilty of such a misdemeanor, he was subject to a one hundred dollar fine or three months in jail. If the guilty person was a free Negro, he was subject to a fine, imprisonment, or whippings not to exceed thirty-nine lashes. The act specifically stated that owners of slaves were not to construe this provision as prohibiting the use of Bibles and hymnbooks for religious services.³⁵

In 1859, the Florida legislature passed an act forbidding the circulation of all books, newspapers, and pamphlets advocating abolition doctrine. Any person who printed or wrote material injurious to the institution of slavery, or circulated such material, was subject to a punishment of fifty lashes or imprisonment of three years, at the discretion of the court. If a postmaster received literature through the mail advocating abolition doctrine, he must have such literature burned in his presence. The person to whom it was directed must be arrested and imprisoned. If the postmaster violated any portion of the act, he was subject to a five hundred dollar fine.³⁶ At the same time, another act allowed slaves to testify since "there was reason to apprehend that some capital offenses committed against the laws of the state by free Negroes, Mulattoes, and other persons of color, may go unpunished because of the want of proper authority to compel the attendance of slave witnesses."³⁷

Legal codes governing slaves were gradually adjusted to include free Negroes of the South. As early as 1830, the threat of the free Negro was seen when David Walker, a northern free Negro, published and circulated throughout the South a pamphlet urging slaves to fight for their freedom. Walker was the child of a slave father and free mother; he left his home in Wilmington, North Carolina, to work and write as an abolitionist in Boston. There was immediate reaction in the South to his writings. The mayor of Boston, Harrison Gray Otis, received letters of protest from the mayor of Savannah, Georgia, and the governor of Virginia, demanding that

35. An act to prevent insubordination among slaves, dated December 19, 1857, ms., Secretary of State's Office, Tallahassee.

36. An act to prevent the circulation of books, newspapers, or pamphlets tending to incite slaves to revolt, dated December 21, 1859, ms., Secretary of State's Office, Tallahassee.

37. An act to provide for the attendance of slave witnesses to capital cases, dated December 16, 1859, ms., Secretary of State's Office, Tallahassee.

Walker's writings be suppressed. Southern legislatures began revising their slave codes to include control of the free Negro so that, in time, his status was little or no better than that of the slave.³⁸

The free Negro population in Florida was very small. In 1850, there were 932 "free persons of color" within the state and there had been no increase by 1860. Most of the free Negro population was centered in the port cities of Jacksonville, Key West, Pensacola, and St. Augustine, where these persons had either emigrated from the West Indies or were descendents of free mulattoes (Creoles) of mixed Negro and Spanish ancestry. These proud people suffered untold grief and humiliation as they were gradually forced into choosing between exile from Florida or acceptance of the legal processes which degraded their status to that of the slave.³⁹

To Floridians, the free Negro population became an evil that must be "eradicated." Free Negroes had a demoralizing effect upon slaves. They were able to travel and pass on information to the slave. When they worked side by side with slaves, were paid their

38. Davis and Redding, *Cavalcade*, p. 42. For the effect of Walker's writings on the South, see Clement Eaton, "A Dangerous Pamphlet in the Old South." Also see Herbert Aptheker, *One Continual Cry*, and Charles M. Wiltse, ed., *David Walker's Appeal*.

39. Free Negro population in cities and towns from Census Returns of 1860:

CITIES AND TOWNS	COUNTIES	FREE NEGROES
Apalachicola	Franklin	6
Fernandina	Nassau	43
Gainesville	Alachua	
Jacksonville	Duval	87
Key West	Monroe	156
Lake City	Columbia	1
Madison	Madison	
Micanopy	Alachua	
Milton	Santa Rosa	32
Monticello	Jefferson	3
Newnanville	Alachua	4
Newport	Wakulla	
Pensacola	Escambia	130
Pilatka	Putnam	31
St. Augustine	St. John's	67
Tallahassee	Leon	46
	Total	606

The total free Negro population in Florida in 1860 was 932. The remaining 326 free Negroes not accounted for in the cities and towns were dispersed throughout the state. Of the free Negro population, 643 were mulattoes (318 males and 325 females). See also De Bow, *Compendium of the Seventh Census*, p. 206; Tallahassee *Floridian and Journal*, February 4, 1860.

dollar or more, and were free to slip away and spend it, the slave became dissatisfied. Southerners came to believe that the only successful means of removing the threat of free Negroes was to expel them from the southern states or to change their status from free persons to bondage as slaves. Though numerous laws were established to regulate the activity of the free Negro in Florida, political action to expel him or change his status as a free person never reached maturity.⁴⁰

Free Negroes were often suspected of being fugitive slaves and were taken into custody as such. In 1846, John Dozier, "a free-born mulatto," who was employed "as a hand by respectable farmers" near Almirante, Florida, was bound and taken forcibly to La Grange, Georgia, by two persons who claimed that he was their slave. When they could not establish proof at La Grange that Dozier belonged to them, he was "thrown into jail . . . according to the laws of Georgia, to be sold to pay his jail fees." Some persons resented the fact that people like Dozier could enter the state and carry off persons suspected of being fugitives. John B. Meigs, in a letter to Governor William D. Mosely, declared, "I should presume that rights to property of that description should be made apparent within the jurisdiction of our own State, where the law in such cases can be administered with as much justice as in Georgia or elsewhere. I trust that your Excellency will state this case officially to the Governor of Georgia and if possible cause the man to be sent to the State of his adoption for trial or sale as the case may be."⁴¹

An unusual circumstance occurred when a slave was stolen by Ben Reed, a free Negro, and sold. Reed stole the slave, "a likely young mulatto," from an owner at Macon, Georgia, and took the woman to Leon County, claiming her as his wife. It just so happened that the owner, being the father-in-law of Green A. Chaires, a prominent Leon County planter, was visiting in Middle Florida and recognized the woman as his slave. At this point, Ben Reed fled and was last heard of in New Orleans.⁴²

Free Negroes who owned property in Florida could not legally

40. Tallahassee *Floridian and Journal*, January 11, 1851, April 11, 1857, January 21, 1860, December 10, 1860; Tallahassee *Florida Sentinel*, April 1, 1851.

41. A letter to Governor William D. Mosely, dated February 25, 1846, ms., Secretary of State's Office, Tallahassee; for a general account of the plight of the free Negro, see "Negroes without Masters," in *The Negro American*, eds. Fishel and Quarles, pp. 127-66.

42. Tallahassee *Floridian and Journal*, January 21, 1860.

will it to their heirs. George Kingsley, a free Negro from Haiti, and son of Zephaniah Kingsley, slave trader at Fort George Island near Jacksonville, owned a considerable amount of cattle and land in East Florida. The 3,900 acres of land were in Duval, Orange, and St. Johns counties. Kingsley was lost at sea in 1846 while traveling between Porta Plata, Haiti, and New York. He had directed in his will that his property be divided between his wife and children, but there was no provision under Florida law for this stipulation. His heirs could not inherit the property, nor could Kingsley's executors, John S. Simms and Oliver Wood, sell the property for the benefit of the heirs. Simms and Wood petitioned the General Assembly to have that body "pass a private act" authorizing them to sell the land so that Kingsley's heirs could have the proceeds they were entitled to under his will. The petitioners were unsuccessful.⁴³

Antonio, George, and John Proctor were three generations of Negroes in Florida who had a noteworthy history. Antonio Proctor was born, as a slave, in Jamaica about 1743. He became the body servant of an English officer and was at the Battle of Quebec in 1759 during the French and Indian War. He became the property of the firm of Panton and Leslie, an Indian trading company in Florida, and worked as an interpreter. In recognition of his services to Spain in subduing the Indians in Florida during the War of 1812, Proctor was granted 185 acres of land near St. Augustine in 1816. A Spanish official at St. Augustine, paying tribute to Proctor, wrote, "This man is not one of the ordinary mulattoes of the place."⁴⁴ By this time, he was a free Negro, but it is not known how or when he obtained his freedom.

In 1821, when Florida became a territorial province of the United States, the Spanish inhabitants were guaranteed "all the privileges, rights, and immunities of citizens of the United States." This guarantee gave the Spanish free Negroes a certain status which other free Negroes in Florida did not enjoy. Thus, Antonio Proctor and his son, George, were "at times treated and allowed to do business on exactly the same footing as white men."⁴⁵ After 1821, Antonio

43. A memorial sent to the General Assembly, dated November 1847. The will of George Kingsley, dated November 21, 1846, ms., Secretary of State's Office, Tallahassee; May, "Zephaniah Kingsley, Nonconformist."

44. Rosalind Parker, "The Proctors—Antonio, George, and John," pp. 19, 20, as quoted in Parker.

45. *Ibid.*, p. 20.

Proctor continued as Indian agent and interpreter for the United States Government, during and after the Seminole War in Florida. The governor of Florida, William P. Duval, paid tribute to Proctor in 1848: "Tony Proctor is well known to me as a man of truth and integrity. Proctor was of great service in controlling the Indians and rendered me, and the country, most essential benefits, from his usefulness with the Indians and his prudence and good sense. His services were invaluable to the United States, and in the management of the Florida Indians at a period when no other person could have preserved the peace of the country." On June 16, 1855, "Old Tony, chief of the Proctor clan," died at the age of 112. His obituary reads, "It may be said of him, in consideration of his long residence in Florida, and the part he acted in her history, that he was a man who, in the course of his career, rendered service to the State."⁴⁶

George Proctor, the free Negro son of Antonio, began his business career in Tallahassee in 1831, first as carpenter, then as building contractor. Eight of the houses he built were still standing in 1945. The first house he erected was in 1835, for Judge Thomas Randall at 424 North Calhoun Street. Shortly after, he built the Rutgers house, more elaborate and elegant than the first, with carriage house, kitchen, and smoke house in the rear, separate from the main house.⁴⁷

In 1839, George Proctor was married in St. John's Episcopal Church (Tallahassee) to Nancy Chandler, a slave whom he purchased from Mrs. Mary Chandler for \$1,300, paying \$450 cash and mortgaging Nancy as security on his note for the remaining \$850 due in twelve months. The church record of his marriage reads, "A free black who purchased his wife." A year later, Proctor, like many other businessmen and planters, was a victim of the depression brought on by the "panic" of 1837. When the note with interest for the balance due on Nancy reached maturity, Proctor could not pay. Mrs. Chandler brought suit against him in the amount of \$1,700 instead of the original \$850, possibly because Nancy was expecting a child or had recently given birth to one and Mrs. Chandler could legally claim the offspring as her slave property while she still had a lien on Nancy. It is assumed that a white friend of George Proctor's intervened, having the judgment assigned to

46. *Ibid.*, p. 21, as quoted in Parker.

47. *Ibid.*, pp. 22, 26.



Ernest Proctor, great-grandson of George Proctor

himself when foreclosure on the mortgage of Nancy was ordered, since there is no record of foreclosure having been made.⁴⁸

George Proctor had eight children, two of whom died in infancy. In 1849, he went to California to re-establish himself financially and to send for his family. He was never heard from again. The mortgage note had still not been paid and the lien was threatening his wife and children. In 1854, Nancy and the children, Charlotte, Georgianna, John, Bahamia, Mary, and George were sold at public auction for \$2,300 to satisfy the judgment in favor of Mrs. Chandler. John Finlayson, of Jefferson County, purchased Bahamia Proctor, fourteen years old, in 1860 for \$1,200.⁴⁹

George Proctor's children remained in Leon and Jefferson counties. Ernest Proctor, grandson of Bahamia Proctor, operates a seed factory in Jefferson County. Garret Proctor, Ernest's cousin, is Deputy Sheriff for Jefferson County, the first Negro to serve in such a capacity. There are many Proctor descendents of "Old Tony" in the general area. On Saturday after Thanksgiving 1970, they held a family reunion in Tallahassee.⁵⁰

In 1860, three of George Proctor's children, Charlotte, Mary, and George, were sold to Colonel George W. Scott for \$2,800. Georgianna and John were hired out in Tallahassee to one person and then another. John learned to read and write, and during Reconstruction taught at several of the plantation schools established by the Freedman's Bureau. He entered politics and in 1882 was elected senator from Leon County, serving in the Legislature from 1883 to 1885. He was later superintendent of customs at St. Marks where he operated a seafood business on the side and also a freight and passenger transportation service. He was 101 years old when he died December 15, 1944.⁵¹

The Proctor children, like other slave children, were victims of one of the most brutal and heartbreaking aspects of slavery. They

48. *Ibid.*, pp. 23, 24.

49. Conversation with Edwin Finlayson, grandson of John Finlayson.

50. Interview with Ernest Proctor at Ashville, Jefferson County. Ernest remembers his grandfather, Bahamia. Bahamia was successful in business and enjoyed good health until his death at age 86. He was a member of the African Methodist Episcopal Church. Many of the other Proctors are Methodists. Ernest has a brother, James Proctor, who is a Methodist minister in Tampa, and two other brothers living in Tampa, Marsellas and Bahamia. In my interview with Ernest Proctor, he told me that his grandfather would be pleased if he could see the progress of the blacks today.

51. Parker, "The Proctors," pp. 26-29.



Lawrence Parker, grandson of slave belonging to John Finlayson

were sold separately to various owners and their families were torn apart. Fortunately for the Proctors, they were not taken to distant places, and slavery would soon be abolished so that they might keep their family ties. Another direct descendent of a Jefferson County slave is Lawrence Parker who was supervisor for Bennett's Dairy near Monticello until his retirement. Parker, the grandson of John Finlayson's carriage driver, shown in the picture of the Finlayson family, is superintendent of the Sunday School and also a deacon in the New Zion Baptist Church near Monticello. His grandfather was born in the West Indies, then taken to Virginia before he was purchased by John Finlayson.⁵² Many of the descendants of Florida slaves live in the general area of their forebears, having remained on or near the plantation after they were freed in 1865.

Floridians considered free Negroes a menace to the state, to be either expelled or enslaved. Free Negroes were undermining the system of slavery and slaves had to be shown that there was no advantage in being free; thus, free Negroes became victims of the slaveholders' fears. Legislation became more forceful; the free Negro had to accept his new role or leave the state. A revenue act of 1845 placed a higher assessment on free Negroes than whites. This rate varied from county to county. For instance, in Leon County for the year 1850, all white males between the ages of twenty-one and fifty paid a tax of fifty-five cents, and the same amount was paid on each slave owned. All free Negroes paid \$3.50 each.⁵³ An interesting petition was made by the citizens of Pensacola to the Florida Legislature on behalf of forty-one free Negroes in that city who "for a long time, composed the only efficient fire engine company" in the area. The petitioners stated that the tax assessment on the free Negroes, who protected their city so faithfully, should be reduced to the same amount assessed white persons.⁵⁴

In 1850, some citizens of Leon County petitioned the General Assembly to have all free Negroes removed from the state. The persons who signed this petition were not the powerful planter group—none of the petitioners owned many slaves. Even so, their

52. Interview with Lawrence Parker at Bassett's Dairy; conversation with Edwin Finlayson at Ashville.

53. Tax Books, 1845-60, Gadsden, Hamilton, Jefferson, Leon, and Madison counties.

54. A memorial made by the citizens of Pensacola on behalf of certain colored persons (n.d.), 1847, ms., Secretary of State's Office, Tallahassee.

complaint expressed the sentiments of southerners generally who thought the free Negro must be expelled from the South. The petitioners declared that "at a crisis like the present, when the stability of the institution of domestic servitude is threatened and every means are adopted by our enemies to compass their ends, it is not only the right, but the duty of the Southern States to protect themselves by every means in their power." They thought free Negroes in Florida constituted "an evil of no ordinary magnitude" and that prompt action should be taken to remove them from the state and an appropriation be made to pay for the expense of their removal.⁵⁵

In 1855, an act was passed which prevented free Negroes from entering the state.⁵⁶ A rather pathetic letter was written as a petition in 1856 by some citizens living in Key West on behalf of Isabella Roma, a free Negro woman. The petitioners asked that the law be modified to permit her to return to Florida from Nassau to be with her father, Thomas Roma, an early resident of Key West. Roma had lived on the island for thirty years and was well respected by the whites.⁵⁷

More touching than this plea was the voluntary exile of a group of free Negroes, known as Creoles because of their Spanish background, from Pensacola to Tampico, Mexico, in 1857. Announcement of this exodus appeared in the *Pensacola Gazette*: "On Tuesday last, thirty-five free colored persons took their departure from this city for Tampico, and in a few days the balance who are still remaining will also leave for the same place. It was a painful sight to see them parting from their friends and their native country to seek homes in a foreign land. They take with them the sympathy of all our citizens on account of the causes which have lead them to leave us, and also our best wishes for their future happiness and prosperity in their new home."⁵⁸

55. A petition made by the citizens of Leon County to remove all free persons of color from the state (n.d.), 1850, ms., Secretary of State's Office, Tallahassee.

56. An act to prevent the migration and importation of free Negroes or mulattoes into the state, dated December 14, 1855, ms., Secretary of State's Office, Tallahassee.

57. A petition from the citizens of Key West asking that certain colored persons be permitted to return from Nassau, dated December 1, 1856, ms., Secretary of State's Office, Tallahassee.

58. Ruth B. Barr and Modeste Hargis, "The Voluntary Exile of Free Negroes of Pensacola," p. 3; quoted in Barr and Hargis from the *Pensacola Gazette*, April 4, 1857.

The free Negroes of Pensacola were a proud people. Their cultural roots ran deep and were nurtured through generations of recognition from the whites. They "owned considerable property, served on juries with their white friends and held a respected place in community life."⁵⁹ The legislative act of 1847 requiring all free Negroes to choose and establish a white person as legal guardian was not fully respected in the cities of St. Augustine and Pensacola where most of the free Negro population resided. Thus, the act of 1856, designed to reinforce the act of 1847, penalized free Negroes by imposing a fine of ten dollars or more upon those who had not established guardianship; they were subject to a jail sentence and court costs if the fine was not paid. More than this, the act prohibited any white person from trading with a free Negro without written consent from the Negro's guardian who must be a white person "of good reputation." Penalty for failure to comply with this clause was a fine from \$100 to \$500.⁶⁰ And so it was that the free Negro lost the quasi-free status he had previously known.

It was probably the act of 1856 which caused the free Negroes of Pensacola to decide that voluntary exile to Tampico, with the hope of building new lives for themselves, would be preferable to the degrading and humiliating legislation now being imposed on them. Not all of the free Negro Creoles chose to leave Pensacola. Those who remained chose guardians. Guardianship proceedings are recorded in Escambia County deed books, and various indentures of transactions made by free Negroes specify their guardians. For example, Marianna Dominques, a free Negro, with written consent of her guardian, Zenon Souchet, was allowed to sell two slaves (a mother and small child) for \$1,200. Carmalite Ordognes, a free Negro, with consent of her guardian, Joseph Gagnet, sold a town lot for \$785 to William F. Lee. Philamena Paris, with consent of her guardian, Celestino Gonzalez, filed suit against Charlotte Etienne to collect \$600 for past due wages she had earned as a hired servant. Charlotte Etienne, who had hired Philamena Paris, herself had a guardian, Peter Gonzalez.⁶¹

59. Barr and Hargis, "Voluntary Exile," pp. 10, 11.

60. An act to prevent free persons of color from trading in the state, dated December 18, 1856, ms., Secretary of State's Office, Tallahassee.

61. Barr and Hargis, "Voluntary Exile," pp. 12, 13. After the Civil War, some of the exiles returned from Tampico. Athalie Gagnet, known and loved by Pensacolians for many years, returned to Pensacola after the Civil War. She is buried in St. Michael's Cemetery.

In 1858, an act was passed by the General Assembly permitting free Negroes within the state to select their own masters and become slaves. The act also stipulated that "upon the complaint of any white person against a free Negro who appeared to be idle or to have dissolute habits," the free Negro was to be arrested and kept in the county jail until the judge would hear his case. If the Negro was judged guilty, he was sold at public outcry to the highest bidder.⁶²

In 1861, to insure tighter control over free Negroes in Florida, an act was passed requiring that all of them register with the judge of probate in whose county they resided. The Negro, when registering, had to give his name, age, color, sex, and occupation, and had to pay one dollar to register. If he moved to another county, he had to pay an additional dollar to receive a registration number entitling him to register in the new county. All Negroes over twelve years of age had to have a guardian. Though they were privileged to choose their guardian, the guardian had to have the approval of the probate judge. The guardian could be sued for any crime committed by the Negro; the Negro could not be sued. Under the new law, any free Negro or mulatto who did not register with the nearest probate judge was classified as a slave and became the lawful property of any white person who claimed possession.⁶³

A perusal of the various petitions made to the General Assembly, letters to the governors, and legislative action taken to control the Negro more thoroughly in Florida reveals one rather clear fact. The psychological fear and reaction to abolition doctrine were acute throughout the cotton belt, where planter groups associated the abolition of slavery with the loss of investments. In the port cities of Key West and Pensacola where the free Negro population was most numerous, where little or no cotton was shipped and persons were not so directly affected by the system of slavery, the whites apparently were not too concerned whether the Negro was a free person of color (mulatto or black) or a slave.

62. *Florida House Journal*, 9th sess., pp. 175, 345.

63. An act defining the condition of free Negroes and other persons of color in the state, dated November 21, 1861, ms., Secretary of State's Office, Tallahassee.

Slaveholders and Plantation Growth

The period of 1825 to 1839 was an era of frontier development in Florida, and also one of land speculation which reached a furious pitch by the late 1830s. By 1837-38, planters were paying ten and twelve dollars an acre for land which had been selling for one and two dollars. The Union Bank of Florida in Tallahassee played an important role in the speculation, lending at high interest rates and requiring little or no security on loans. By 1840, the national financial crisis of 1837 had begun to affect Middle Florida, with the result that some planters lost their holdings and the Union Bank went out of business. The years which followed are generally considered a time of depression. The price of cotton remained low, and the economy of the nation as a whole had not fully recovered.

During the late 1840s the economy rallied, and for the remainder of the antebellum period, throughout the cotton belt of the slaveholding states, there was economic prosperity. This was especially evident in Florida among the members of the planter class. Their standard of living rose as they adjusted their tastes and habits to an expanded cotton economy. Newer and finer dwellings replaced the log cabins and frame cottages of the frontier and depression era. Sterling silverware, linen sheets, and expensive horses and carriages were typical accessories. Vacationing at resorts to escape the summer heat became commonplace. Daughters and sons were sent to boarding schools and universities in adjoining states or in the North.

What had been "the luxuries of the forties became the common necessities of the fifties."¹

Solon Robinson described Middle Florida in 1851 as being "settled by a high-bred class of inhabitants." Robinson thought that the planter group, especially in the Tallahassee area, was a cultured class of people and the "society there was very agreeable." He also stated that though the planters were "real land destroyers" they were "money makers."² There is evidence to show that his observations were correct. Plantation management was efficient; it was not unusual for net returns from cotton crops to average from \$5,000 to \$15,000 annually, and for some planters, returns were much greater. Investments in land and slaves brought profitable returns. Inventories and plantation accounts show that the more well-established plantations represented investments of \$100,000 to \$300,000, and a few as much as \$500,000.

The gentleman planter of the late ante-bellum period stands as the symbol of the "Old South" and its way of life. Most of the wealth and power of the slaveholding states was controlled by members of this aristocratic group, though they constituted only a small percentage of the white population. The majority of the white people in Florida, as in other cotton states, belonged to the yeomanry. They owned small estates or none at all, and most owned no slaves. There was a tendency for these yeomen to climb into the planter class, and they frequently did when acquiring sufficient acreage and slaves to classify them as such. Class distinctions were based on wealth, though there was some recognition for differences in education and breeding.³

Some of the larger plantations that developed in Florida as a result of the migrations of settlers and slaves from the older cotton states were those in Jefferson County belonging to David Barrow, William Bailey, William J. Bailey, William Bellamy, Edward C. Cabell, John Finlayson, James Gadsden, and George Jones. Barrow

1. Inventories and appraisements of estates, probate records, Gadsden, Hamilton, Jefferson, Leon, and Madison counties; Moore, *Agriculture in Ante-Bellum Mississippi*, p. 181; Olmsted, *The Cotton Kingdom*, 2:418. Olmsted described the wealth of Mississippi planters as he traveled through the cotton belt. In the area surrounding Natchez, none was worth less than \$100,000 and some were worth \$10 million.

2. *The American Agriculturist* 10 (1851):148; Gray, *History of Agriculture*, 1:492, 499.

3. Gray, *History of Agriculture*, 1:497.

had 1,800 acres of land, 128 slaves, and other valuable property. Bailey and Bellamy had large holdings, averaging approximately 4,000 acres each. Bellamy owned 209 slaves and Bailey 269. Cabell was one of Florida's representatives to the national Congress from 1847 to 1853. He owned a large plantation and ninety-eight slaves. Finlayson, Gadsden, and Jones were typical of this group.⁴

Gadsden County's wealthy planters were Charles H. Dupont, James Gibson, William Monroe, Benjamin F. Whitner, and William E. Kilcrease, comparable to those already mentioned. In Leon County, there were Edward Bradford, James E. Broome, Thomas Brown, Richard K. Call, Fred Cotten, Benjamin C. Chaires and his sons, Benjamin, Jr., Green, Furman, and Joseph, John G. Gamble, Samuel Parkhill, Jeremiah Powell, John L. Shepard, and Joseph J. Williams. These men were prominent in the affairs of Florida as the financial and political leaders of the state.⁵ Broome and Brown were governors during the late ante-bellum period.

In Madison County, Isaac Bunting, Lucius Church, Richard Harrison, John Lipscomb, Richard J. Mays, John C. McGehee, Reddin W. Parramore, and Jeremiah D. Reid were representative of the wealthier planters who owned more than 1,500 acres of land and numerous Negro slaves. In Hamilton County, Adam S. Goodbread, Nathaniel P. Marion, Francis J. Ross, John R. Stapler, and the Thomas brothers (Joseph and Robert) were successful planters who owned more than thirty slaves.⁶

In Alachua County, C. C. Adamson, the Haile family (Amelia, Edward, and Thomas), W. H. Stringfellow, John Whitaker, and David R. Williams were representative of those with extensive holdings in acreage and slaves. In Marion County, James T. Hopkins, Colonel S. H. Owens, W. A. Owens, and the Reverend J. B. Owens were among the wealthier slave-holding planters. In Jackson County, James L. G. Baker, Elijah Bryan, William H. Dudley, F. R. Ely, John D. Myrick, and the Russ family owned large numbers of slaves and sizable acreage. Most of the persons mentioned

4. Tax Books, 1850, 1854, 1860, Jefferson County, Florida State Library, Tallahassee; Unpublished Census Returns, 1850, 1860.

5. Tax Books, 1850, 1855, 1860, Gadsden and Leon counties; Unpublished Census Returns, 1850, 1860.

6. Tax Books, 1847, 1854, Madison County; Tax Books, 1850, 1855, 1860, Hamilton County; Unpublished Census Returns, 1850, 1860. (Some of the tax books for the period involved are missing.)

owned more than a hundred slaves and one thousand to three or four thousand acres of land.⁷

When planters died intestate or when they left wills directing how their estates should be managed or divided, administrators or executors for these estates made accountings regularly in probate record books. These record books, listing estate inventories and appraisals, together with deed records, tax books, unpublished census returns, and bits of information gathered from descendents, have made it possible to learn more about some estates than others.

Leon County became an area of centralized wealth. Large plantations developed there and Negro slaves outnumbered whites about three to one.⁸ Samuel Parkhill was a typical settler who migrated to Florida and accumulated wealth in land and slaves. He started buying land in Leon County in 1828, and by 1839 he owned 4,400 acres and 80 slaves. He apparently had two separate plantations: 2,300 acres were located northwest of Tallahassee touching Lake Jackson, and the remaining 1,000 acres were northeast of the city.⁹ Parkhill died in 1841, leaving no will and a heavily mortgaged estate.¹⁰ His widow, Martha Ann, petitioned the Superior Court of Leon County for one-third of the estate as a widow's dower. At the time of his death, the Union Bank valued Parkhill's real estate holdings and slaves at \$138,300. Since his acreage and slaves were mortgaged to the bank, the court allowed the widow to claim only one-third of the \$4,400 personal property; this included 383 bales of cotton, furniture, livestock, farm equipment, and 2,020 bushels of corn.¹¹ The meagerness of this inheritance may have been a factor in Martha Ann's marriage, almost immediately, to Hiram Manley of Apalachicola.¹²

The financial story of Benjamin C. Chaires is somewhat different, though Chaires followed the same general pattern in buying land, purchasing small amounts at first and finally establishing himself

7. Tax Books, 1860, 1861, Alachua, Marion, and Jackson counties; Unpublished Census Returns, 1850, 1860.

8. Tax Book, 1839, Leon County.

9. Deed Records, 1827-39: Book A, p. 217; Book D, p. 445; Book E, pp. 370, 380, 624, 772; Book F, pp. 314, 407; Leon County.

10. Tallahassee *Star of Florida*, March 31, 1842.

11. A court paper of the inventory of the personal estate of Samuel Parkhill, dated May 19, 1842, Leon County. The citation "Leon County" as utilized hereafter refers to Leon County Court Records, Florida State Library.

12. Deed Records, Book H, p. 325; Book I, p. 172.

over a period of about ten years.¹³ He appears to have been less of a speculator than Parkhill, for his heirs were able to carry on with his holdings and manage his plantations successfully after his death. There were no suits filed by the Union Bank against the Chaires' heirs, nor did they file any against the bank.

Chaires' largest land purchase was in 1836 when he bought from George Fauntleroy for \$50,000 a plantation with all its appurtenances; this included 800 acres, 57 slaves, and all improvements on the property. An interesting fact about this purchase is the discrepancy of \$25,000. The Deed Record lists \$25,000 as the price Chaires paid, but a mortgage record for this same indenture shows that Chaires obligated himself for \$50,000, covered by five promissory notes of \$10,000 each, bearing 8 per cent interest and maturing within five years.¹⁴

This transaction took place through the Central Bank of Florida, which had been established in 1832 with Chaires as president; the Central Bank, however, was short lived, and was absorbed by the Union Bank. Discrepancies involving amounts paid for property frequently appear in the records; often the correct amount was not recorded because of tax evaluations.

Chaires died in 1838, leaving his property to his wife and children: "to my beloved wife Sarah Chaires . . . my mansion or dwelling house and 500 acres around it . . . my household furniture, carriages and horses and negro man Henry, the carriage driver; also one-tenth part of all my personal estate." He had ten children, five of them minors at the time of his death. Apparently Chaires felt no affection for his son-in-law, William Burgess, the husband of his daughter Mary Ann, for he did not include her in the one-tenth share but left her a separate sum of \$10,000 to be paid "whenever her husband . . . shall die, and not before. . . . It being my express desire that said William Burgess shall not have any part of the same or enjoy any benefit whatsoever." ¹⁵

Chaires appointed his brother, Green Chaires, and his son, Joseph Chaires, executors of his estate. Green and Joseph must have also disapproved of Burgess, for they gave Mary Ann five female Negro

13. Deed Records, Book A, pp. 172, 540; Book E, pp. 147, 581; Book F, p. 47.

14. A court paper of a mortgage made by Benjamin C. Chaires, dated November 17, 1836, Leon County.

15. Will of Benjamin Chaires, June 12, 1835, Will Record, Index to Estates, Book One, File No. 31, Leon County.

slaves and a horse and barouche with harness. However, it was distinctly understood that they would hold this property for the "separate use of Mary Ann, free from the control of William."¹⁶

The Leon County Tax Book for 1839 lists the estate of Benjamin Chaires as 9,440 acres of land, 80 slaves, \$800 worth of pleasure carriages, with a territorial tax of \$110 and a county tax of \$86. In 1842, Chaires' son, Joseph, made a foreclosure in the interest of his father's estate against Robert Berry for \$31,570, which included a large amount of land and slaves.¹⁷ This foreclosure probably accounts, in part, for the later increase in the size of the estate. By 1845, the plantations of the Benjamin C. Chaires Estate were still intact and the County Court authorized property division among the heirs. This included about 10,000 acres and numerous slaves, together with a crop of provisions at each of the plantations, livestock, including horses, mules, cattle, hogs, and plantation utensils of all kinds.¹⁸

Census and plantation records have proved to be the best sources for information on the value, yields, equipment, organization, and operation of plantations.¹⁹ Although the 1840 census lists total amounts of agricultural goods produced in Florida and total figures showing aggregate amounts of equipment and their values, it does not, for this early period, provide the production by individual planters, as may be found in the unpublished census returns for 1850 and 1860.

Inventories and appraisals of estates help to complete a picture of plantation life; they list specifically the articles which were necessary equipment for operating the plantation. The inventory of Samuel Parkhill's estate contains a long list of these items, such as horse wagons, ox wagons, spades, plows, blacksmith tools, chains, hoes of many kinds, and various sorts of harness and gear. Parkhill's livestock included twelve mules, eight horses, two oxen, fifty-seven sheep, fifty-four hogs, and fourteen cows.²⁰

John G. Gamble, another planter worthy of mention, migrated to Florida from Richmond, Virginia, taking his family and slaves with him "when the stumps of the forest trees were still in the streets."

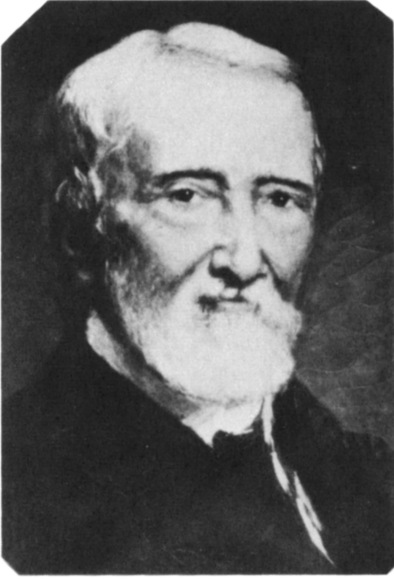
16. Deed Records, Book C, p. 612, Leon County.

17. A legal letter of execution against the property of Robert Berry, dated May 2, 1842, Leon County.

18. Will of Benjamin Chaires.

19. Sellers, *Slavery in Alabama*, p. 26.

20. Inventory of the personal estate of Samuel Parkhill.



John Grattan Gamble



Colonel Robert Gamble



Robert Gamble's plantation mansion on the Manatee River

The family caravan of carriages, wagons, and carts with slaves and livestock arrived in Tallahassee on Christmas Eve, 1821, and encamped on the St. Augustine Road. Gamble's background was one of culture; his father had been a Virginia gentleman planter and personal friend of George Washington. Gamble had six children, Robert, Julia, Katherine, John Grattan, William, and Christopher Greenup. Gamble's wife was the former Nancy Peyton Greenup of Kentucky, daughter of Christopher Greenup, one of the first governors of that state. In addition to playing an important part in the early history of Florida as planter and banker, John G. Gamble and his wife were outstanding social figures, noted for their hospitality and charm.²¹

Gamble was typical of the ambitious young men attracted to Florida by the opportunities latent in her rich soil. These young migrants helped develop the resources of the territory and set the pattern for the southern gentleman planter. Gamble's first years were spent building Welaunee, his plantation in Jefferson County. He increased his holdings rapidly, and, in little more than a decade, owned a great number of Negro slaves and another plantation. Deed records show that he purchased this plantation complete in 1835 from Richard Allen, Romeo Lewis, and Samuel Duval,²² for \$42,000. This did not include an additional \$5,000 paid for sixty-nine slaves. Ten years later, this same tract of land, with the exception of forty acres, was sold at public auction for \$814 and Gamble was the buyer! Apparently, he had never made any payments on the \$42,000 transaction, which would seem to indicate that, even though he was president of the Union Bank from 1833 until it collapsed in the late 1840s, and was an active participant in affairs related to the cotton industry, Gamble was no different from some other Florida planters in his financial reliability.²³

In the Florida Peninsula, as early as 1835, extending south along the Halifax River, five or six large sugar plantations were under successful operation. During the Seminole War in 1836 and 1837, Indians sacked the plantations, destroying "sugar houses" and ex-

21. Lula Dee Keith Appleyard, "Plantation Life in Middle Florida, 1821-1845," p. 62. Gamble's father was Robert Gamble and resided at Grey Castle, Gamble's Hill, Richmond. John's brother, Robert, brought his family to Middle Florida during the late 1820s and established a plantation in Jefferson County.

22. Deed Records, Book E, p. 81, Leon County.

23. *Ibid.*, Book H, p. 505.

pensive equipment used to manufacture sugar. One of these plantations, Dun Lawton, belonging to a Louisiana planter and deserted because of the depredations of the Seminole Indians, had all improvements and equipment worth \$12,000 to \$15,000 still standing as late as 1850.²⁴

After the Seminole War, sugar plantations once again developed in southern Florida. Robert Gamble, William P. Craig, Josiah Gates, George H. Wyatt, and Joseph Braden were representative of a large number who migrated with their slaves to Manatee County from Middle Florida to engage in the sugar industry. Gamble, financed by his father, John G. Gamble, developed a sugar plantation on the Manatee River near Ellenton, an area that opened for settlement following the Seminole War in 1842. The Gamble holdings on the Manatee, where cane was cultivated and manufactured into sugar, embraced 3,500 acres and included 142 slaves. Although still a bachelor, Gamble had his slaves begin to construct his mansion with bricks made from lime, shell, and sand, the lime produced by burning, crushing, and sifting oyster shells. These same ingredients went into the tabby with which the exterior was plastered. The imposing two-story structure, ninety-three by forty-three feet, with eighteen columns around three sides, took seven years to construct; it was completed in 1850.²⁵

Gamble invested in an elaborate outlay of equipment and steam-powered machinery, valued at \$82,650, to manufacture the sugar on his plantation. A labor force of sixty-five slaves, forty men and twenty-five women, was engaged in cultivating the cane and processing the sugar. His annual cost for slave labor was \$75 per hand for his males and \$60 for his females. His sugar production in 1850 was 230,000 pounds, or 230 hogsheads (a thousand pounds to a hogshead), valued at \$9,000.²⁶

Gamble was heavily indebted to New Orleans merchants and

24. De Bow, *Industrial Resources*, 1:336, 349; *The Southern Cultivator* 18 (1856):269-70; 15-16 (1857-58):142.

25. Manuscripts in possession of John Grattan Gamble, Tallahassee. In 1865, Judah P. Benjamin, Confederate Secretary of State, sought refuge in the Gamble mansion on the Manatee while fleeing Union officials. In 1873, the mansion was purchased by Major George Patton for \$3,000 at public auction and was later abandoned. In 1923, the long-neglected home was purchased by the Judah P. Benjamin Chapter of the United Daughters of the Confederacy, and in 1926, it was acquired by the state and restored as the Judah P. Benjamin Memorial.

26. Unpublished Census Returns (Industry), 1850.

had mortgaged his slaves for extension of credit. In 1852, the firm of McConochie and Donnell of New Orleans foreclosed on a portion of his property to secure a past due debt of \$5,000.²⁷ In 1858, Gamble's entire plantation, complete with all equipment and 185 slaves, valued at \$190,000, was lost in a foreclosure made by John Calvin Cofield and Robert McGeorge Davis of Louisiana. Gamble returned to Leon County where he married Martha Chaires who had inherited a rather large estate from her father.²⁸

Joseph Braden and his brother, Hector Braden, of Leon County migrated with their slaves to the Manatee River about 1843. A deed record for this year shows that Joseph and his bride, the former Tallahassee belle Virginia Ward, purchased a tract of land with extensive frontage along the Manatee River, contiguous to the acreage of Hector Braden. Partial payment for the land was made by the transfer of some property in Leon County. The two brothers, in partnership, acquired 1,100 acres. This was a choice site for the development of a sugar plantation. A small stream, Sugar House Creek, flowed across the plantation. The slaves used this stream at high tide to take boatloads of produce across to a larger stream, known as Braden Creek, which flowed into the Manatee River. Sending sugar and other produce by boat to schooner or steamboat landings in the river to be shipped to market was more convenient than hauling these goods through deep sand in wagons drawn by teams of oxen.²⁹

Deposits of travertine (a light-colored, porous calcite), found along the banks of Sugar House Creek, were mined by the Braden slaves to quarry stone for construction of the large chimneys necessary for the sugar mill. Hector Braden was killed in a storm on the Little Manatee River in 1846,³⁰ but his brother continued in the sugar industry until the 1850s. Joseph Braden's steam-operated equipment and machinery for manufacturing sugar were valued at \$77,000. Fifty-five of his slaves were employed in the sugar mill. Production in 1850 was 100,000 pounds, valued at \$6,000.³¹

Joseph Braden's financial career on the Manatee River was similar

27. Deed Records, Book B, pp. 51-55, Hillsborough County, Tampa. Manatee County was "Manatee District" in Hillsborough County in 1852. Early records for Manatee County are located at the Court House in Tampa.

28. McDuffee, *Lures of Manatee*, pp. 103-5.

29. *Ibid.*, pp. 31-33.

30. *Ibid.*, pp. 33, 53.

31. Unpublished Census Returns (Industry), 1850.

to that of Gamble's. Braden's property was heavily mortgaged and foreclosures were made to satisfy creditors. The migrations of Gamble, Braden, and other young planters from Middle Florida to the Manatee River to develop sugar plantations as an industrial endeavor had been temporary. By 1860, sugar production in Manatee County was less than that of Marion County.³² The mansion of Robert Gamble on the Manatee River and the ruins of Joseph Braden's "castle" near Bradenton still stand as monuments to the sugar industry in Florida.

The financial activity of Jeremiah Powell serves as another example of extension of credit not adequately covered by collateral. Powell's plantations of about 2,700 acres were located east of Tallahassee, near the Jefferson County line. He and his family lived on his "home" plantation, but he kept most of his forty-five slaves on his "lower place," known as Pleasant Grove. Powell died in 1839; his will, made the preceding year, left his estate to his wife and six children. It was his wish that they should be maintained, clothed, supported, and his children educated from the proceeds of the two plantations. He also provided that for ten years after his death \$100 should be given annually to the Methodist Episcopal Church of the Leon County Circuit.³³ After Powell's death, the bank sued his heirs, and tried repeatedly to take possession of Pleasant Grove.³⁴

John L. Shepard arrived in Florida about 1830 and acquired over a period of time a considerable amount of property.³⁵ He became a director in the Union Bank, an influential stockholder in the Tallahassee Railroad Company, and an active participant in other territorial affairs. His largest purchase of land and slaves was a 1,637-acre plantation, including 66 slaves, located north of Tallahassee, near Lake Jackson, touching the Gadsden County line. This \$53,700 purchase from John and Letitia Gamble was made through the Union Bank in 1838, and, like many others, required no initial pay-

32. McDuffee, *Lures of Manatee*, pp. 103-5; De Bow, *Compendium of the Seventh Census*, p. 210; *Agriculture of the United States in 1860*, p. 99. Much of the machinery for manufacturing sugar on David Levy Yulee's plantation at Old Homosassa in Citrus County is still standing. Yulee was Florida's first United States Senator. At New Smyrna Beach, Volusia County, sugar mill equipment is still standing.

33. The will of Jeremiah Powell, dated January 23, 1838, Leon County.

34. Letters and suits against the Powell heirs, filed by the Union Bank, 1841-45, Leon County.

35. Deed Records, Book A, pp. 151, 153, 190, 428; Book D, p. 230, Leon County.

ment. It is interesting to note that this financial obligation was to be met in four separate installments of \$13,425 each, due between 1861 and 1868—twenty-three years from purchase date!³⁶

In 1842, Shepard purchased another plantation at a bargain price of \$2,236, one which the Union Bank sold at public auction. This was property which had belonged to Alfred Gatlin before his death in 1841. Like many other planters, Gatlin's property was mortgaged to the bank which had already satisfied a \$25,000 indebtedness by securing fifty-three slaves belonging to his estate. Almost immediately after Shepard obtained Gatlin's property at forced sale, he lost a portion of his own acreage and slaves, the Union Bank having attached them for the sum of \$9,000.³⁷ The same property became involved in law suits filed against one another by Gatlin's widow and Shepard. After Gatlin's death, the widow, Sarah Ann, married Turbot Betton, and later tried to claim a large portion of her deceased husband's plantation which Shepard had bought at public auction. At the same time, claims against the widow were assigned to Shepard by the Union Bank, which was by now defunct.³⁸ Both parties finally agreed to relinquish their suits against each other.

From these examples of planters and their financial activities, it should not be assumed that the majority lost their holdings. It is true that some did, for deed records after 1840 show instances in which valuable plantations were sold at public auction for almost nothing. Other planters simply held their cash, left debts unpaid, and continued to operate their plantations during the depression of the 1840s. The Union Bank failed, for in very few instances was it able to collect from its debtors, the planters. Easy money, speculation, and very little feeling of moral obligation seem to have been characteristic of the territorial period; there was little or no government regulation of the banks, which permitted their directors to operate in devious ways.

The typical plantation home was a handsome two-story building, often constructed of brick which had been made by slaves on the plantation. Some were frame houses, painted white. All of them were designed for comfort, being well supplied with large windows and front and rear verandahs, or verandahs running all the way

36. Deed Records, Book E, p. 638, Book H, pp. 406-7, Leon County.

37. A suit filed by the Union Bank against John Shepard, dated January 5, 1842, Leon County.

38. Deed Record, Book K, p. 33, Leon County.



Verdura, built in the 1830s, home of Benjamin Chaires

around the house. The house usually stood at the end of a long oak-lined driveway and was surrounded by landscaped gardens. Classical Greek architecture was frequently used, and the location was a high point so that the mansion could command a view.

Some distance from the house stood a row of Negro cabins. Other outbuildings included a gin house, an overseer's house, stables, a carriage house, a blacksmith's shop, and a loom house. Some plantations had additional outbuildings such as infirmaries or hospitals large enough to accommodate six or eight Negro slaves. Heavy equipment consisted of a grist mill, cotton gin, and engines to operate them, and corn cribs, a sugar mill, and other necessary appliances.³⁹

One of the most stately plantation mansions in Florida was Verdura, built by Benjamin C. Chaires. In 1832, Chaires sold his house in Tallahassee, "The Columns," and began construction of Verdura on a 500-acre site ten miles east of the city. The massive fifteen-room, three-story structure was built by his Negro slaves of bricks made from clay deposits on the plantation. Verdura stood on high ground, overlooking rolling fields and woodlands, with a convenient, picturesque stream encircling the hill on which it stood. The mansion faced south. Leading up to the front and rear entrances were broad stairways, and on the east and west sides there were spacious verandahs supported by Greek columns. Inside the house a double staircase led from the second floor to the third. From the attic, the Gulf of Mexico could be seen on clear days. The two main downstairs rooms and hallway were often cleared of furniture and made into an eighty-foot ballroom.

Abandoned to the havoc of time after a fire in the 1880s, the

39. *The American Agriculturist* 9 (1850):223; Tallahassee *Floridian and Journal*, October 3, 1857; James C. Bonner, "Plantation Architecture of the Lower South on the Eve of the Civil War"; Vance, *Human Geography of the South*, p. 370. Bonner's account of southern architecture is derogatory. He claims that most of the homes were untidy and had a messy appearance, that the kitchens were unappetizing and "fly ridden." He also states that the romantic picture of the southern planter calling up slaves with a volume of Plato in one hand and Aristotle in the other, or sipping mint juleps, is simply erroneous. Vance presents a less harsh evaluation and claims that southern architecture during the antebellum period was a notable achievement in adjustment to weather. "The verandahs, the wide high porches, set off by white columns, and the high ceilings did more than achieve a type of beauty. They protected the house from beating rains but more than that they shaded it from the sun's slanting rays. The hound dog, the cat, and the southern colonel with his mint julep followed the shade around the verandah."

molded ruins of the mansion now stand near the mossy tombs of the Chaires' family cemetery off the St. Augustine Road. Dates on some of the tombstones indicate that several members of the family may have died only a few days apart from such diseases as malaria or yellow fever, both of which were prevalent at the time. One tombstone marks the grave of Chaires' devoted slave, his coachman, Henry, named in his will.⁴⁰

Fred R. Cotten and his brother John W. Cotten were another planter family who acquired wealth from land and slaves in Leon County. John W. Cotten died in 1845. In his will, dated 1843, he directed that his two executors, Fred R. Cotten and his brother-in-law Henry T. Clarke, manage the estate for his wife and three daughters. He had no sons. He also directed that, should his estate be divided between his wife and children, "they all fare equal and alike. In case of death of any of my precious children or my dear wife, it is my will and desire that my whole estate be equally divided between the living part of my family (White, of course, and only white)." ⁴¹

Fred R. Cotten administered his deceased brother's estate until 1857. His accountings show that shipments of cotton went regularly via St. Marks to New York from John W. Cotten's plantation and the proceeds were credited to his estate.⁴² Meantime, he was becoming one of the largest owners of land and slaves in Florida. Accountings show that, in 1857, much of his deceased brother's plantation was being sold at public auction and Fred R. Cotten was the buyer! By 1860, his property holdings were valued at \$375,000, and he owned 274 slaves.⁴³

James Whitehead and his son John B. were one more family who accumulated wealth in Leon County. James Whitehead came to Florida from the Georgia Piedmont. Though the exact date of his arrival is not known, deed records show that he purchased land in Leon County during the 1830s. The Leon County Tax Book for 1839 lists Whitehead as owning 1,250 acres of land and 44 slaves.

40. From conversation with John Grattan Gamble and from newspaper clippings and other records in his possession. Mr. Gamble is the great-grandson of John Grattan Gamble who settled in Florida in 1821. He is also a great-grandson of Benjamin Cadwalder Chaires, whose daughter, Martha, was the mother of Howard Gamble, the present Mr. Gamble's father.

41. *Record of Wills*, Book A, pp. 82-84; Deed Records, Leon County.

42. *Book of Sales of Personal Estates, 1846-1860*, pp. 362-64, Leon County.

43. *Ibid.*; Tax Books, Leon County.

Whitehead died in 1847, leaving a large estate to his five children. He stipulated in his will, dated 1847, that his two plantations in Georgia and his Florida plantation be divided equally among his five children. He directed that his executors "invest in land and negroes, all the surplus funds arising from the use of my children's property." He thought that "land and negroes constituted the best and safest property for young men in the South." He also directed that his executors immediately purchase for his son, John B., "six additional working hands, three to be boys or young fellows and three to be girls or young women" to be used on the plantation bequeathed to the son. This purchase was not to be made until the executors found it "entirely convenient to do so with the surplus funds arising from the sale of my crops over and above the necessary expenses and liberal support of my other children." Whitehead bequeathed to his son-in-law, Thomas Nesbitt, the sum of \$20,000 to be paid him in cash. "Ten thousand dollars to be paid from the proceeds of a lot of cotton now in the hands of Bustin Walker, Augusta, as soon as the sale is effected. The remaining ten thousand dollars to be paid out of the surplus money arising from the sales of all my crops." ⁴⁴

From 1847 to 1857, John B. Whitehead managed Forest Hills, the plantation in Leon County. By 1850 Forest Hills consisted of 2,500 acres and 183 slaves. It is estimated that an average of three hundred or more bales of cotton were produced annually on the plantation during the 1850s: from December 1849 through November 1850, 291 bales were exported from St. Marks in six shipments, bringing a net return (after all costs) of \$16,034 to the estate; from November 1858 through March 1859, 386 bales were exported in thirteen shipments, with a net return of \$19,554. Most of the shipments were lots of either twenty-five or fifty bales. ⁴⁵

John B. Whitehead made his will in 1857 and died that same year. He left seven children and divided his estate equally among them with certain provisions. He stipulated that his "summer residence at

44. *Record of Wills*, Book A, pp. 113-17, Leon County. One of James Whitehead's Georgia plantations, Spread Oak, was located in Burke County. In his will, he refers to this as his winter home. The other plantation, located in Richmond County at Bath near Augusta, was his summer home. He refers to the plantation home at Bath as his mansion.

45. *Book of Sales of Personal Estates, 1846-1860*, pp. 78-81, 226-74, Leon County; Unpublished Census Returns (Agriculture), 1850. The census lists 301 bales in 1850.

Bath" near Augusta, Georgia, be kept for his three unmarried daughters, Julia Amanda, Ruth Berrien, and Valeria Burroughs, and his unmarried son, Charles, until they married. To his married daughter Philoclea, whose husband was Thomas Neely, he left "a negro girl, Sarah, worth six hundred and fifty dollars." For the other married daughter, Eliza, whose husband was Charles W. West, and to whom Whitehead had previously advanced \$12,000, he directed that this amount be deducted from Eliza's portion.⁴⁶

A similar stipulation was made for his son, John R., who had previously been given "thirty negroes, the plantation known as Forest Hills and other small amounts at different times." John R. Whitehead also received his father's portrait hanging at Bath, "his faithful servant Ben," his walking cane, and his gold watch. Whitehead left the portrait of his deceased wife to Ruth, one of the unmarried daughters. To the other unmarried daughters he directed that his executor purchase for each "a handsome ladies' gold watch with suitable chain and trinkets at their discretion."⁴⁷ Unquestionably, the Whiteheads were as affluent as any among the planter group in Florida.

As planters recovered from the depression brought on by the panic of 1837, they developed more understanding of the importance of diversifying crops to enrich the soil and of producing sufficient food to maintain slaves and livestock on the plantation. The agricultural reform movement encouraged a more scientific approach to planting. The commercial conventions, whose groups the planter class controlled, expostulated upon the importance of breaking the hold of northern merchants upon the economy of the South. This could only be done with a self-sufficient economy which manufactured its own goods and provided its own services.⁴⁸

Though the South continued to be an agrarian society, dependent upon the North for manufactured goods, there was a trend toward diversification and the self-sufficiency of plantations became more

46. *Record of Wills*, Book A, pp. 269-74, Leon County.

47. *Ibid.*; Eppes, *Through Some Eventful Years*, refers to the Whitehead family in her book.

48. De Bow, *Industrial Resources*, 3:92-115; *The Plough, Loom, and Anvil* 4 (1851-52):326; miscellaneous correspondence and resolutions to create and incorporate the Southern Pacific Railroad Company; also a report of the Commercial Convention of the Southern and Western States held in Charleston, South Carolina, dated June 13, 1854, made by Wilmont G. DeSaussure, mss., Secretary of State's Office, Tallahassee.

evident. Corn, peas, beans, sweet potatoes, and sugarcane were cultivated for home consumption on all of the cotton plantations in Florida. Cotton, of course, was the cash crop to which all other crops were secondary. Tobacco, also an important cash crop, though never as profitable as cotton, was cultivated chiefly in Gadsden County. Rice, oats, and rye were grown on some plantations and wheat on a few for bread served on the planters' tables.⁴⁹ James Gibson, a Gadsden County planter, grew small amounts of wheat to demonstrate the adaptability of the soil for cereals.⁵⁰

Livestock was essential to plantation operation. Numerous horses, mules, asses, milch cows, beef cattle, oxen, sheep, and swine were to be found on most of them. Beef cattle and swine were slaughtered regularly for home consumption. The hides were tanned and the leather used to make shoes for Negroes, or they were packed in rolls and exported. Corn, used to feed both livestock and Negroes, was the most important of the food crops.⁵¹

Molasses, pork, corn meal, and sweet potatoes constituted the basic food for Negroes. Wool produced from sheep was often spun and woven with cotton fiber. The finished cloth was kersey, a rough material used to make garments for Negro slaves. Orchards were numerous and some wine was produced. More often, wines and liquors were purchased from a merchant or ordered from New York. Only in Leon and Jefferson counties did planters grow grasses extensively to cut and dry for use as fodder.⁵²

Frequently, plantations had their own spinning wheels, looms, and tanneries where clothing and shoes for slaves were made by Negro seamstresses and cobblers. The inventory of Richard Harrison's property in Madison County lists five spinning wheels and a loom.⁵³ There was a tannery on William J. Bailey's plantation, Lyndhurst, in Jefferson County, where hides were cured and shoes made for his slaves from the leather. Bailey had no loom and the

49. Unpublished Census Returns (Agriculture), 1850, 1860. Undoubtedly, planters were diversifying crops long before 1850. Prior to 1850, census returns did not list amounts of agricultural produce cultivated by individual planters; conversation with Sumter Mays, descendent of William J. Bailey, Ashville, Jefferson County.

50. Tallahassee *Floridian and Journal*, June 13, 1857.

51. *Ibid.*; Moore, *Agriculture in Ante-Bellum Mississippi*, pp. 109-22.

52. Unpublished Census Returns (Agriculture), 1850, 1860; account sheets made by firms listing purchases made by planters, Probate Records.

53. *Record Book of Annual Returns*, Probate Records, pp. 259-71, 307-9, Madison County.

cotton cloth made into clothing for his slaves was woven on Richard J. May's plantation in Madison County.⁵⁴ The loom house is still standing on John Finlayson's plantation, Glendower, in Jefferson County.⁵⁵

So convinced was one resident of the efficiency and success of Florida planters that he declared they were rapidly accumulating fortunes. They did not "trudge over their plantations in patent leather boots and silk stockings" as some slaveholders were prone to do. Instead, they and their children could sometimes be seen "in a full suit of homespun, wove and made up at home." Also, "all or a portion of their Negro clothing was made at home." In addition, they could boast that the increase by birth doubled their slave property every fourteen years. This was a long-term gain over and above annual net returns per working hand, which averaged better than 12 per cent.⁵⁶

Jefferson County was a wealthy area, second only to Leon County. This county was noted for its spacious plantations and for its large slave population. William Bailey was one of Jefferson County's most notable figures. He settled southwest of Monticello (the county seat) near Lloyd, and, in time, acquired great wealth. In 1840, he led a company of volunteers against the Seminole Indians, and for this accomplishment he received the rank of general. He was married three times and had seven children. His first wife died in 1847 and several years later he married Eliza Branch of Leon County, Governor John Branch's daughter. She bore him a son and later died. Bailey was seventy years old when he married the third time in 1860.⁵⁷

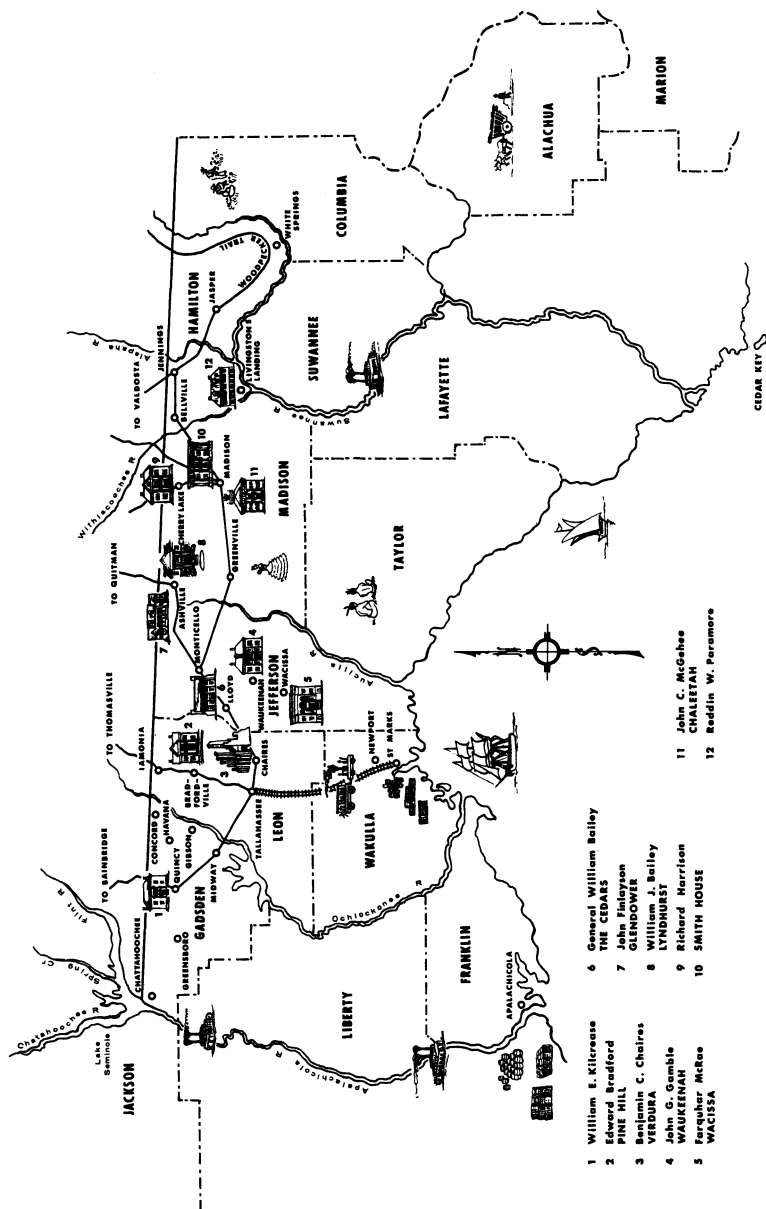
As plantations grew in size, the size of the slave labor force increased also. This can be seen in the development of Bailey's two plantations. His Jefferson County plantation, The Cedars, consisted of 5,500 acres of land, approximately two thousand under cultiva-

54. Conversation with Miss Virginia Mays and her brother, Sumter Mays. The Mays are descendants of several planter families, William J. Bailey, William Bellamy, and Richard J. Mays. Until 1966, Virginia and Sumter Mays lived in the old plantation home Lyndhurst, built by Bailey in 1854.

55. A visit to Glendower, John Finlayson's plantation near Ashville, and conversation with his grandson, Edwin H. Finlayson. The Finlayson plantation is located just north of William J. Bailey's.

56. Marianna *Florida Whig*, January 20, 1849.

57. McRory and Barrows, *History of Jefferson County*; conversation with Mrs. Martha Bailey Brinson, grandniece of William Bailey, Monticello; Abbey, "Documents Relating to El Destino and Chemonie," p. 245.



Plantation homesites

tion. Bailey owned 269 slaves in 1850 and his yield of ginned cotton was 550 bales. His other plantation in Leon County, though not so large, was equally productive. Together the two plantations represented an investment of \$250,000 in equipment, land, livestock, and slaves. His net annual return from cotton alone during the 1850s averaged \$30,000.⁵⁸

Bailey's two plantations were largely self-sufficient. Among his equipment were spinning wheels and looms. The thread was spun and the cloth, a rough cotton, was woven for his Negro seamstresses to make the garments used to clothe his slaves. Bailey was a strong advocate of southern economic independence. He conceived the idea of establishing a cotton factory in Middle Florida to supply the needs of planters and to redirect the flow of money to northern merchants and manufacturers. To promote this aim, Bailey organized in 1856 the Southern Rights Manufacturing Company near Monticello and the State Bank of Florida in Tallahassee. There were no banks in Florida after the failures brought on by the panic of 1837 until Bailey organized the State Bank, which eventually became the Lewis State Bank.⁵⁹

In addition to Bailey's acreage and slaves, the Jefferson County Tax Book for 1850 lists him as the owner of \$4,000 worth of town property in Monticello and as having loaned out \$60,000 at interest. He also owned stock in the Tallahassee Railroad Company and the Pensacola and Georgia Railroad Company.⁶⁰ It is difficult to evaluate his worth—perhaps he was Florida's first millionaire.

Bailey died in 1866. His estate was rather large, even at the end of the Civil War. His property was divided among his family and he left numerous small legacies, notably "Five hundred dollars each year for ten years to be applied to the education of poor orphan children of soldiers who fell in the Confederate service in this state."⁶¹

William J. Bailey, though not as wealthy as his uncle, General William Bailey, was typical of those with larger holdings in Middle

58. Tax Books, 1850, 1855, 1860, Leon County, Jefferson County; Unpublished Census Returns (Agriculture), 1850, 1860.

59. Manuscripts in possession of Mrs. Martha Bailey Brinson, Monticello; McRory and Barrows, *History of Jefferson County*, pp. 109-10.

60. Miscellaneous correspondence and reports relating to the Tallahassee and Pensacola and Georgia Railroad companies, dated 1855-59, mss., Secretary of State's Office, Tallahassee.

61. *Record of Wills*, Probate Records, Book A, pp. 477-81, Leon County.

Florida. Bailey came to Jefferson County from Georgia in 1840. In 1844, he married the rich widow of Abraham Bellamy (a son of John Bellamy mentioned earlier) and bought a tract of land northeast of Monticello where he developed his plantation, Lyndhurst. Between 1845 and 1860 he increased his holdings and enlarged his plantation to include 6,760 acres and 95 slaves, with a total value of \$143,000. He had other assets in cattle and equipment. He was also guardian and administrator for the estate of Abraham Bellamy's children until they reached maturity, and he received a handsome sum for managing their estate.⁶²

Construction of Bailey's plantation home was begun in 1850 and completed four years later. The handsome antebellum mansion is still standing and until recently was owned and occupied by Bailey's lineal descendants, Virginia Mays and her brother Sumter Mays. The home is a three-story dwelling of brick and painted wood. The brick extends to the second floor, its deep purplish hue making an attractive contrast to the white wood above. The brick was made in Bailey's kiln on his plantation from clay deposits on his land. The purplish color of the brick is a result of the heavy iron content in the clay (Hawthorn formation).

The interior of Lyndhurst is beautiful. The rooms are spacious and the walls below the chair rails are paneled. This paneling extends into the sides of the deeply recessed window openings, the recess caused by the thickness of the walls. This was not unusual in construction and was so designed for insulation, keeping the rooms cooler in summer and warmer in winter. Each room has a fireplace, handsomely framed with a mantle of marble and wood. The floors are of wide "heart" pine, finished in the natural wood. The interior angular stairway extends to the third floor, and its railing is in the style of Chinese Chippendale.⁶³

Another success story is that of John Finlayson, who came to

62. Tax Books, Jefferson County; Unpublished Census Returns, 1850, 1860; *Inventories, Appraisements and Accounts*, Book A, pp. 24-26, 29-31, *Accounts Current of Executors, Administration and Guardians*, Book A, pp. 327-30, 393-96, Jefferson County.

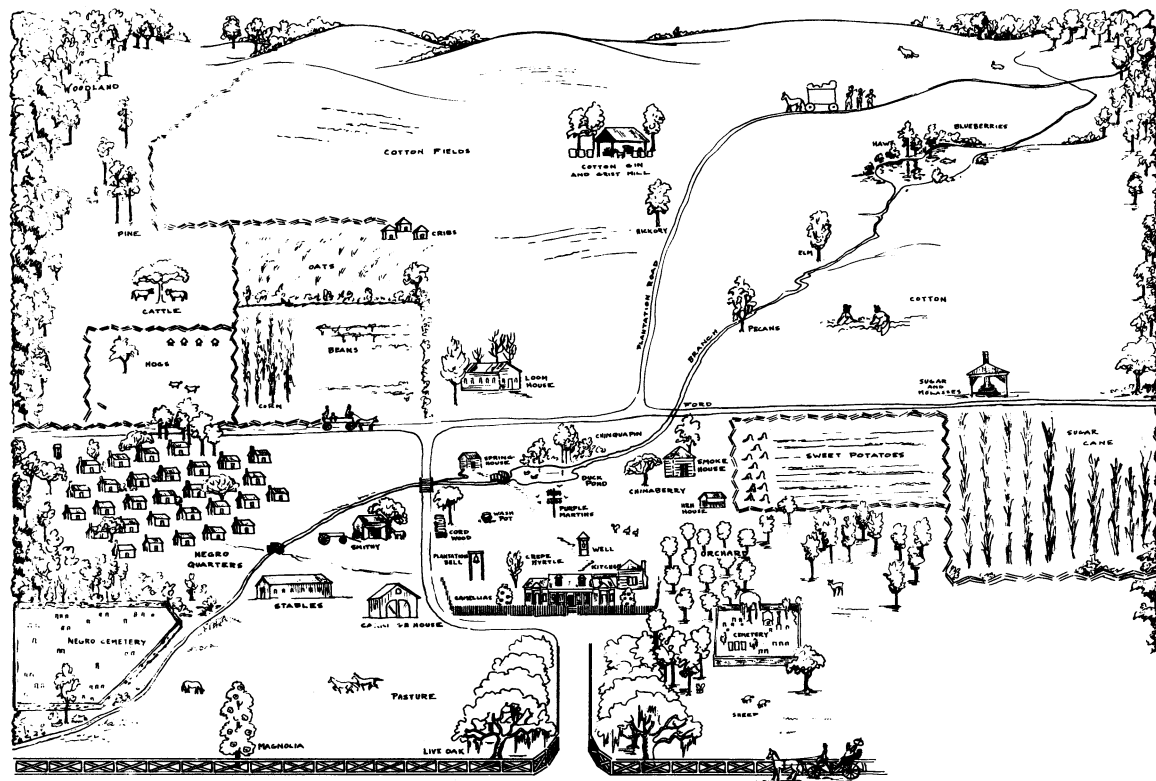
63. Observations made and conversation with Virginia and Sumter Mays while visiting Lyndhurst. Miss Mays told of many events which had been passed on to her of life on the plantation during slavery times. Miss Mays and her brother later sold Lyndhurst and purchased a small cottage at Quitman, Georgia, taking two Negro servants with them from the plantation. These two servants are descendants of the slaves who belonged to William J. Bailey of Lyndhurst.



John Finlayson



John Finlayson's family at Glendower (from an old print)



Glendower, 3,200-acre estate of John Finlayson in Jefferson County

Florida from Telfair County, Georgia, in 1839, having accumulated a modest fortune of \$35,000 as a commission merchant. He invested most of his capital in land and slaves and began business as a planter in Jefferson County.⁶⁴ Shortly after his arrival, he purchased two thousand acres of land just north of William J. Bailey's plantation, and increased his holdings at that location over a period of years until by 1860 his plantation, Glendower, consisted of 3,200 acres. He also invested in slaves from time to time and, by 1860, owned 170, most of them bought in Louisville, Georgia, and Norfolk, Virginia.⁶⁵

The decade of the 1850s was a prosperous era generally for planters throughout the Lower South, as evidenced in Middle Florida by the increase in plantation production and in the value of plantations, crops, and slaves. Finlayson's plantation operations and output serve as a good example. In 1850 on 1,000 acres of improved land the yield was 330 bales of ginned cotton, 5,000 bushels of corn, 1,000 bushels of peas and beans, and 3,000 bushels of sweet potatoes. Ten years later the yield had doubled.

When Finlayson died in 1865, his estate was valued at \$328,000. An inventory and appraisal of his personal property made just after his death lists 384 bales of cotton valued at \$17,280. This cotton, stored in Liverpool warehouses, had been shipped directly by schooner from St. Marks and Cedar Key, either before the Federal blockade became complete or by "running" the blockade. Other personal property included \$23,000 in Confederate money, \$8,000 in Southern Railroad stock "now in hands of enemy," 120 shares of State Bank of Florida stock valued at \$20,000, and 132 shares of South Western Railroad Company stock worth \$13,300.⁶⁶

The inventory also lists 187 slaves valued at \$127,000. Though

64. *John Finlayson of Aucilla* (n.d.), a short biography of John Finlayson written during his lifetime. In possession of Mrs. Alice Boyd, a great-granddaughter of Finlayson, Glendower plantation, near Ashville; *Letters Testamentary and Letters of Administration*, Probate Records, Book A, pp. 136-41, Jefferson County.

65. Tax Books, Jefferson County; Unpublished Census Returns (Agriculture), 1850, 1860; manuscripts in possession of Edwin H. Finlayson, Ashville. John Finlayson was elected several times as a representative to the Florida General Assembly. In 1859, he was made president of the Senate, and in 1860 was a candidate for governor.

66. *Letters Testamentary and Letters of Administration*, Book A, pp. 136-41, Jefferson County; a visit to Glendower and conversation with Edwin H. Finlayson, Ashville.

his slave property was a loss even before the inventory was made, his financial condition at the end of the Civil War was good. His children and grandchildren have continued to work his lands. John Finlayson and his wife are buried in the old family cemetery which lies several hundred feet east of where the plantation home stood. The cemetery is still being used by the Finlayson family.

Madison County was an extension eastward from Jefferson County of the richly fertile soil on which cotton was cultivated so profitably. The story of settlement and eventual wealth for the planters of this area was much the same as in Leon and Jefferson counties, though large plantations were fewer. One could almost say that a colony of South Carolina planters settled in Madison County.

Richard Harrison was one of these South Carolinians. He came to the area during the 1840s from the Piedmont region of South Carolina near Greenville, settled along the rich banks of the Aucilla River, and developed a plantation on 1,600 acres of land. As the years passed, he increased both his real estate and his labor force. At the time of his death in 1854, Harrison was worth \$150,000. He can be reckoned a wealthy planter if the inventory of his estate is any indication: he owned 145 slaves valued at \$80,000, a "no. 1 stallion, Stormaway," valued at \$500, linen sheets valued at six dollars apiece, twenty-five mules valued at \$4,450, and other perishable property.⁶⁷ He had many outstanding debts when he died and his widow was forced to sell some of his land and slaves to satisfy his creditors. His plantation continued to operate under an overseer. In 1857, the cotton yield was valued at \$11,000.⁶⁸

John Lipscomb, like Richard Harrison, chose Madison County as a likely area to invest in land for the successful development of cotton plantations. Lipscomb was from "Edgefield District" in South Carolina. The exact date of his arrival in Florida is not known. His name appears on the county tax book for 1847 and his holdings were rather large at that time.⁶⁹ He purchased land and slaves over a period of time as an investment for his seven children and, by 1854, owned 160 Negroes and several tracts of land in Madison County, constituting 5,500 acres in all.⁷⁰

67. Tax Books, 1847, 1854; Deed Records, Madison County; *Record Book of Annual Returns*, pp. 259-71, 309, Madison County.

68. Tallahassee *Floridian and Journal*, November 15, 1856.

69. Tax Book, 1847, Madison County.

70. *Ibid.*, 1854; Deed Records, Madison County; Unpublished Census Returns (Agriculture), 1850.

Lipscomb was worth \$300,000 at the time of his death in 1856. He stipulated in his will, made that same year, that each of his children was to receive \$12,000. He must have felt a fondness for his mother-in-law, for he left a \$100 legacy to be paid to her annually. His "Village in Edgefield" (South Carolina) and all of his slaves (it is not known how many he owned in South Carolina) were divided among his children. He also directed that when the division of his slaves was made, his executors "avoid the separation of negro families" to insure the "good morals of the negroes."⁷¹

John C. McGehee, also from South Carolina, migrated to Florida and started buying land in Madison County as early as 1834.⁷² He had served an apprenticeship in John C. Calhoun's law office at Charleston before settling in Madison County and his background in law served him well. He became county judge and an active participant in Florida politics.⁷³ The tract of land McGehee purchased in 1834 consisted of 1,200 acres at a price of six dollars an acre. The tract was located southwest of the town of Madison, the county seat. At a later date he purchased another 1,800 acres contiguous to this tract, enlarging his plantation, Chaleetah, to 3,000 acres.⁷⁴

McGehee was a strong advocate of states' rights and southern economic independence. He encouraged manufacturing and gave financial support to Florida's first shoe factory, at Stellapicker, a site now known as Tan Yard Creek.⁷⁵ In addition to his plantation holdings valued at \$100,000 in 1860, McGehee owned a sawmill and railroad stock.

Romance and tragedy filled McGehee's life in Florida. His elaborate Victorian mansion, Chaleetah, built and named for his beloved wife, Charlotte, was completed in 1860, but she became ill and died as she and McGehee were preparing to move into their

71. *Wills and Letters Testamentary*, Book BB, pp. 37-41, Madison County.

72. Deed Records, Tax Book, 1854, Madison County.

73. Carlton Smith, "Judge John Charles McGehee," a paper read by Smith to the Madison County Historical Society at Oakland Cemetery, June 13, 1963; Rosa Galphin, "John C. McGehee."

74. Smith, "Judge John Charles McGehee"; Unpublished Census Returns (Agriculture), 1850, 1860.

75. Smith, "Judge John Charles McGehee" (McGehee led the Secession Convention); *Wills and Letters Testamentary*, Probate Records, Book BB, p. 200. McGehee died in 1882. He stipulated in his will, dated 1882, that he be buried beside his wife in Oakland Cemetery. He bequeathed his estate to his two nieces.

new home. They had no children. McGehee and his wife are buried in Oakland Cemetery nearby, his tombstone adorned with the Masonic emblem.

The plantation area where McGehee settled extends eastward about thirty miles, embracing the fertile Bellville section just east of the Withlacoochee River in Hamilton County. Though this small area was desirable, Hamilton County as a whole did not compare favorably, with regard to cotton production, with Madison, Jefferson, Leon, Gadsden, Jackson, Alachua, and Marion counties.

Bellville, named for Daniel Bell and his two brothers who followed him to Florida, became a flourishing settlement when planters discovered that cotton could be cultivated profitably on the rich lands along the Withlacoochee. The Bells opened a general merchandise store, and Bellville became a town complete with post office, hospital, stores, and hotel. Today all that remains is a large Negro population and several dilapidated buildings that were once the center of town. A few of the homes built by early settlers are still standing throughout the countryside. Their style of architecture is that of the less pretentious houses built prior to 1860; they are constructed of logs or boards with the open hallway or "dog run" through the center of the house.⁷⁶

There were other areas in Hamilton County fertile enough for profitable cotton cultivation. A few plantations developed along the Alapaha and Suwannee rivers, and southeast of Jasper, the county seat. Francis J. Ross, typical of the early settlers who migrated to Hamilton County from lower Georgia, purchased a small tract along the Alapaha River in 1839.⁷⁷ He later sold the land. Between 1840 and 1850 he purchased 2,300 acres southeast of Jasper where he developed a cotton plantation.⁷⁸

It is interesting to speculate about Ross. If census returns are correct, he was a planter whose holdings were only middle-sized, and he never owned more than sixty-one slaves. He cultivated Sea Island cotton, averaging only twenty bales a year.⁷⁹ Ross had accounts with several merchants at White Springs. His account with the firm of John B. Spencer for the period April 15, 1858, to Febru-

76. Observations made by the writer while visiting the area.

77. Deed Records, Book B, pp. 77, 94, 161, Hamilton County.

78. *Ibid.*, Book C, pp. 101, 132, Book D, pp. 47, 58, 65, 252.

79. Tax Books, 1850, 1855, 1860, Hamilton County; Unpublished Census Returns (Agriculture), 1850, 1860.

ary 25, 1861, amounted to \$560. Purchases were made regularly for barrels of whiskey. Entries on Spencer's ledger sheets for the period 1860 and 1861 read: "Nov. 8, 1 Bbl. Whiskey, 42 gals., \$28.56; Jan. 10, 1 Bbl. Whiskey, 44 gals., \$28.60; June 13, 1 Bbl., 40½ gals., \$38.38; Aug. 2, 1 Bbl. Whiskey, Extra. \$30."⁸⁰ Shortly after this last purchase Ross died.

Gadsden County lies in the western area of the plantation belt, separated from Leon County on the east by the Ochlockonee River. The western boundary is the Apalachicola River. Owen Fillyaw came to Gadsden County from South Carolina shortly after the new territory opened for settlement. Fillyaw bought land, developed a cotton plantation, and, when he died in 1833, left a rather large estate,⁸¹ which he directed to be divided among his wife and ten of his eleven children. He, no doubt, disapproved of his son-in-law for he left the eleventh child, Caroline Chambers, "wife of James Chambers of South Carolina, the sum of twenty-five dollars, and no more."⁸²

Only one of Owen Fillyaw's sons, Oscar, owned and operated a plantation in Florida after 1833. He cultivated cotton and tobacco, and, by 1850, there were 105 slaves on his 1,400-acre plantation. The cotton crop for that year was 175 bales and the tobacco crop 11,000 pounds. For consumption on the plantation, 5,500 bushels of corn, 1,000 bushels of sweet potatoes, 3,000 pounds of sugar, and 1,000 gallons of molasses were produced.⁸³

Fillyaw's career as a planter was cut short in 1850 when he died suddenly. He left two small children and a widow who was expecting his third child. His estate, valued at \$75,000, was managed by his two brothers, Owen and James A. Fillyaw, but they appear not to have managed the plantation profitably. Records of expenses charged to the estate for trips to and from South Carolina and for their commissions as executors left little income for Oscar Fillyaw's family.⁸⁴

The financial story of William E. Kilcrease is somewhat different

80. Francis J. Ross Estate (no file number), Probate Records, Hamilton County.

81. Tax Books, 1845, 1850, 1855, 1860, Gadsden County; Unpublished Census Returns (Agriculture), 1850, 1860.

82. *Records of Wills*, Book 6, p. 179, Gadsden County.

83. Tax Books, 1845-60; Unpublished Census Returns (Agriculture), 1850, 1860.

84. Oscar Fillyaw Estate (no file number), Gadsden County.

from Fillyaw's. Kilcrease settled in Gadsden County in the 1830s, and increased his holdings so that by 1850 he owned a 6,240-acre plantation and 149 slaves. He had an average annual yield of 200 to 300 bales of ginned cotton between 1850 and 1860. He also cultivated sizable amounts of tobacco and other crops: in 1860 his tobacco yield was 20,000 pounds, corn 4,000 bushels, sweet potatoes 2,000 bushels, 2,000 gallons of molasses from cane, and 500 bushels of peas and beans. His sheep produced 400 pounds of wool and his vineyards 20 gallons of wine. The value of his animals slaughtered for home consumption was \$3,000.⁸⁵

Kilcrease died in 1860 leaving an estate worth \$208,550: his plantation was valued at \$50,000, slaves at \$135,550, farming implements and machinery at \$10,000, and livestock at \$13,000. He directed in his will, dated 1860, that his executors "keep my planting interests up for the space of 7 years; I further desire that they shall turn over the crops to J. R. Harris Esqr., that he may from the proceeds reimburse himself for all advances received by me through his kindness, my intention being that payment be made to him first of all my creditors." He also directed that "having formed a co-partnership in planting" with R. A. Waller in Georgia, his executors continue to "furnish additional force in such number" of slaves that were necessary to continue successful operation of the plantation.⁸⁶

Kilcrease's executors carried out his instructions and "kept his planting interests up" until 1865. The amount of Sea Island cotton produced on his lands between 1860 and 1864 was phenomenal. The following listings are entries from an accounting made by Kilcrease's executors showing cash receipts from August 14, 1863, to February 13, 1864:

Aug. 14, from W. R. Pettus for 7,708 lbs. S. I. cotton at \$1.00	\$7,708.00
Aug. 29, from W. R. Pettus for 7,425 lbs. S. I. cotton at \$1.00	\$7,425.00
Oct. 3, from J. R. Harris Co. for W. R. Pettus, 16,409 lbs. S. I. cotton at \$1.00	\$16,409.00

85. Tax Books, 1845, 1850, 1860, Gadsden County; William E. Kilcrease Estate (no file number), Gadsden County; Unpublished Census Returns (Agriculture), 1850, 1860.

86. *Record of Wills*, Book 6, p. 1005, Gadsden County.

Oct. 23, from Thomas J. Perkins, net proceeds 56 bales S. I. cotton sold Liverpool and due Oct. 1, 1861 as per account sales rendered by Smallwood, Earl and Co. \$4,565.10

Nov. 23, from Adler and Fleishman for 24,189 lbs. Short cotton at .40 \$9,675.60

Feb. 13, from Adler and Fleishman for 6,568 lbs. S. I. cotton at \$1.25 \$8,232.50⁸⁷

Though the entry of October 23 was for cotton sold in 1861, the remaining entries represent a total of 62,299 pounds of cotton, the yield for 1863. The gross return was \$49,454. Cash was also received by the estate during these same months for corn, tobacco, a small amount of acreage sold, and Negroes hired out. Total receipts amounted to \$67,754. Even when allowance is made for brokers' fees, costs of shipping, insurance, and the like, it can be seen that cotton culture was a profitable enterprise.⁸⁸

From these examples of planters and their financial activities, it is evident that their investments in land and slaves for plantation operations brought profitable returns.

87. William E. Kilcrease Estate, Gadsden County.

88. Ibid. Among the papers in the Kilcrease file is \$3,000 in Confederate money. Kilcrease is referred to as General Kilcrease. Many of the planters mentioned had titles such as general, colonel, captain, and doctor.

Cotton, the Factor, and Plantation Supply

Florida planters cultivated both short staple and Sea Island cotton. The most common varieties of short staple cotton grown throughout the Lower South were Green Seed, Mexican, Petit Gulf, and Mastadon.¹ Florida growers preferred the Mexican to other "short" cotton seed. Under favorable conditions, it yielded about 1,500 pounds of cotton to the acre. In other areas, the yield was not so great; in the fertile black belt of Alabama, yields of 800 to 1,000 pounds of short staple per acre were obtained. In the less fertile South Carolina Piedmont, 100 to 300 pounds was considered average. In 1852, J. D. B. De Bow estimated that the average yield for the South was 530 pounds of short staple, or seed cotton, per acre.²

Cotton growers in Florida soon discovered that the soil was especially suited for the growth of Sea Island cotton. It was superior to the short staple, and, because of the length of its fiber, it was used for the finest fabrics and sewing thread. French manufacturers used it to adulterate their silk fabrics. Though the Sea Island variety required more space for cultivation and took about four weeks longer to mature, its market price per pound was about twice that of short staple. Hardy Bryan Croom, the noted Florida botanist and owner of Goodwood Plantation in Leon County, Florida, wrote in

1. Moore, *Agriculture in Ante-Bellum Mississippi*, pp. 145, 233; *The Farmers' Register* 2 (1835):2.

2. Gray, *History of Agriculture*, 2:708. Material in this chapter appears in an article by the author titled "Cotton and the Factorage System in Ante-Bellum Florida."

The Farmers' Register in 1834 that an average of 600 pounds of Sea Island cotton was produced per acre and that it was not uncommon for 800 pounds to be realized. In South Carolina, the average yield of Sea Island cotton was 300 pounds per acre.³

Croom stated that it was necessary to prepare the Sea Island cotton with roller-gins in order to avoid breaking the staple and "destroying that *length of fiber*" which was its real superiority over the other varieties. The short staple was prepared for market with saw-gins, more commonly used than the roller type. Sea Island cotton was originally grown in the Bahama Islands. When its superior quality was realized, some planters of the Sea Islands along the coast of Georgia, notably Thomas Spalding of Sapelo Island and Josiah Tatnall and Nicholas Turnbull of Skidaway Island, began cultivating this new variety.⁴

Florida proved to be a most desirable place for growing Sea Island cotton since successful cultivation was limited to coastal regions near salt water. Many planters thought the only essential for growing Sea Island cotton was a "saline atmosphere"; with it, any soil would produce fine cotton, and without it, no soil could produce.⁵ Scientific farming was in its infancy and few Florida planters used fertilizer prior to 1850, largely because of the virginity of the soil and the abundance of new land, though they were aware of the advantages of enriching the soil: "Many of us are beginning to learn that it is not only easier and better, but even cheaper to renovate our old lands, than emigrate to a new country and bring new lands into cultivation."⁶

Planters came to realize that, if they were to produce an article of superior quality, their prosperity and ability to meet the demand for the staple depended more on restoring the fertility of the land than on the quantity of land under cultivation.⁷ Florida planters were free from the strong prejudices which bound the planters of older regions. They used the plow more extensively and were able to cultivate more acreage per hand, a contributing factor in the growth of the cotton industry in Florida.⁸ Though there were ad-

3. *The Farmers' Register* 2 (1835):3.

4. Shofner and Rogers, "Sea Island Cotton in Ante-Bellum Florida," p. 374.

5. *The Farmers' Register* 2 (1835):335.

6. *The Southern Cultivator* 1 (1844):205; *The American Cotton Planter* 1 (1853):201-5.

7. *The Southern Agriculturist and Register of Rural Affairs* 1 (1828):72.

8. Gray, *History of Agriculture*, 2:734.

vantages from the soil, planters were not without the crop hazards which were a bane to all who participated in the culture of cotton.

A frost, coming sometimes as late as April, might destroy the whole field. A strong, dry northeast wind might tear and blight the young plants. It was not infrequent for the cutworm to appear in April, devastating a whole crop, which meant replanting in May. As the plants grew, thinning and weeding were necessary to avoid overcrowding. August was a month of anxiety and doubt; too much rain might cause the plants to cast off fruit, blossoms, and leaves, just at their maturity, or the caterpillars might descend. Those destructive worms became voracious shortly before their maturity and possessed the ability to destroy whole fields overnight. They appeared only about once every seven years.⁹

Methods of cultivation varied; the hoe and plow were most common. One progressive planter reported that he never used the hoe; instead he used horse-drawn implements, such as the scraper, skimmer, and sweep, which were more efficient for shallow cultivating than ordinary plows. They covered a greater width when making a furrow.¹⁰ The planting of short staple cotton began in March and extended through early May. Sea Island cotton was planted the last two weeks in March.¹¹

Cotton started blossoming about the first of June. Picking began in August, or when a hand could gather about fifty pounds in a day; it was picked over several times from the first to the last opening of the bolls. Pickings as late as December and January were not unusual, to gather the last remaining cotton from the plants. Cotton left on the bush too long might easily be injured by sun, wind, or rain, causing the oil to evaporate in the plant, thus reducing its weight. The picked cotton was stored in close bulk from four to eight weeks "to allow it to heat, care being taken not to allow it to heat too much, and to let the oil from the seed diffuse through the lint, imparting to it the 'ting' so admired by buyers and manufacturers."¹²

9. *The Farmers' Register* 2 (1834):701; Tallahassee *Floridian and Journal*, February 23, 1856.

10. Gray, *History of Agriculture*, 2:701.

11. *The Farmers' Register* 2 (1835):2.

12. Savannah *Evening Journal*, January 21, 1854; Gray, *History of Agriculture*, 2:703-4. Gray states that planters thought it was a good idea to let cotton "sweat" in the gin house before ginning; also that there was a general tendency, during the early years, to gin cotton too rapidly, thus injuring the fiber.

After this preparation, cotton was ready for ginning. Discriminating planters saw that their cotton was ginned carefully at a moderate speed and that packing was done in damp and moderately rainy weather. This resulted in better packing and heavier weight. The bagging was then put on loosely to allow for any swelling; the ropes around the bagging were put on tightly to prevent any undue expansion of the bale.¹³

Occasionally, planters allowed their cotton to be fraudulently packed. An article written by the Cotton Brokers Association in Liverpool to the American Chamber of Commerce in 1835 stated that the fraudulent practice of packing cotton caused great concern and suggested that planters attach their names on the bales so that those who proved reliable could demand a preference in the market. The usual method of this dishonest practice was to place good cotton on the two sides of the bale to be sampled, leaving the inside packed with inferior quality.¹⁴ It was not unusual to find trash, rocks, or water in the center of the bales, placed there to increase the weight. These practices created a storm of protest from cotton factors; they threatened to publish the names of persons indulging in such methods.¹⁵

When the factor or broker discovered that cotton was fraudulently packed, the planter was notified and penalized by being offered a lower price. Oscar Fillyaw received such a notice in 1850 from Robert Mason, a Liverpool broker, when Mason discovered that two of Fillyaw's seven bales were "falsely packed and unmerchantable, the whole of said two bales throughout consisting of alternate layers of Saw Gin and Sea Island Cotton, and short stapled Upland Cotton, and I consider the value of said cotton in its present mixed condition to be 7 cents per lb." ¹⁶

Cotton gins, presses, and other heavy plantation equipment necessary to prepare cotton for shipping were expensive, and many of the planters could not afford them; they usually paid a more fortunate neighbor for the use of such equipment. Alfred Gatlin of Leon County had "doubtful notes and accounts amounting to \$111 and good notes amounting to \$81" for the use of his equipment

13. Savannah *Evening Journal*, January 21, 1854; *The American Agriculturist* 18 (1859):261.

14. *The Farmers' Register* 3 (1836):700.

15. Davis, *The Cotton Kingdom in Alabama*, p. 145.

16. Miscellaneous papers found among Oscar Fillyaw's estate file, dated 1848-55 (no file number), Probate Records, Gadsden County.

during 1841.¹⁷ In the early period of plantation growth in Florida, cotton instead of cash was sometimes used as a medium of exchange. An account book, dated 1829, kept by the firm of Laudaman and Sheffield in Tallahassee lists entries of cotton, corn, and tobacco in exchange for merchandise.¹⁸ Plantation accounts found among county courthouse records, dated 1845 to 1860, show that corn and hides were frequently used by planters as payment for merchandise.

When cotton was ready for shipment, "six-mule team" wagons hauled it to the warehouse in Tallahassee or on to St. Marks. Wagons from several plantations often traveled in groups.¹⁹ Prices covering the cost of marketing cotton varied by locality, depending on the distance to port and methods used to move the cotton. During the early 1820s, total costs for handling and shipping cotton from a Georgia plantation averaged six dollars a bale. Improved conditions in handling and shipping reduced costs slightly during the next decade and the average appears to have been nearer four dollars.²⁰ Charges for marketing cotton increased after 1840, averaging five dollars per bale. As an example, in 1844, total charges for shipping and selling forty-eight bales of cotton from William Bellamy's plantation in Jefferson County through St. Marks to New York were \$242.²¹ Marketing costs increased during the 1850s: total charges for shipping and selling seventy-five bales of cotton from John Whitehead's plantation in Leon County were \$584;²² for thirty-eight bales from Isaac Bunting's plantation in Madison County, total charges from St. Marks to New York in 1859 were \$287.²³

The importance of cotton was a natural result of the demand for it at home and abroad from manufacturers who found a ready market for the finished products. Cotton employed "millions of the human family in its culture, commerce, and manufacture" and in-

17. Sarah A. Gatlin Dower Assignment Letters, dated 1842-45, mss., Florida State Library, Tallahassee.

18. Laudaman and Sheffield Store Account Book, dated 1829, ms., Florida State Library, Tallahassee.

19. Eppes, *The Negro of the Old South*, p. 89.

20. Gray, *History of Agriculture*, 2:716.

21. An account of sales for cotton found among the papers in William Bellamy's estate file, dated July 16, 1844, File 33-43, Probate Records, Jefferson County.

22. *Book of Sales of Personal Estates, 1846-1860*, p. 265, Leon County.

23. An account of sales for cotton sold for the estate of Isaac Bunting, dated January 22, 1859, ms. in possession of Carlton Smith, Madison, Florida.

directly employed as many more "who produced the articles required for the sustenance of those first so engaged." In 1850, the consumption of cotton in England and the United States averaged five to six pounds per person, in France about four pounds per person, and in Prussia about three. Fabrics and garments made from cotton grown in the southern United States were superior to those manufactured from India cotton, and the finished products were universally preferred.²⁴

In 1850, ginned cotton produced throughout the South totaled 2,445,793 bales, representing an investment of more than \$90 million. Production increased to 5,387,052 bales by 1860, an investment of over \$200 million.²⁵ Cotton was by far the most valuable commodity produced in the United States prior to 1860. The method of marketing cotton meant that a large portion of its profits were siphoned away from the South by northern merchants and factors. Whether cotton was destined for European or New England manufacturers, it was usually bought by New York speculators, factors, and commission merchants who represented Liverpool or New York houses.²⁶ Some Florida planters shipped their cotton directly to Liverpool, but the vast majority shipped to a factor in New York, either directly or through a commission merchant in Middle Florida.²⁷

The planter or southern merchant received advances on or payment for the cotton shipped, usually by means of sixty-day sterling bills or four-month New York drafts. "These bills and drafts were discounted by southern banks and forwarded to New York where they went to pay the debts of southern merchants and planters, or to secure cash with which to purchase bills which came flooding in as the staple went forward." The significance of cotton to the economy is evidenced by the "solicitude with which the business interests of New York, especially in time of depression, looked forward to the moving of cotton, and speculated as to the crop and the price it would bring. . . ." During the financial crisis of 1857, New York merchants and bankers "considered it

24. *Report of the Commissioner of Patents* (1852), pp. 306-7.

25. *Agriculture of the United States in 1860*, p. xciv.

26. Robert R. Russel, "Economic Aspects of Southern Sectionalism, 1840-1860," p. 101.

27. Estate records found among probate records showing accounts with commission merchants and factors, Gadsden, Hamilton, Jefferson, Leon, and Madison counties.

essential to survival that cotton continue to move, whatever the price, and hoped the planters would be willing to let it go forward at the low prices shippers could offer.”²⁸

Planters were dependent upon New York, since almost everything connected with the plantation was bought on credit. The factorage system constituted the main source of that credit. The foundation of that system depended on the potential value of the unharvested crop, the bank, the factor, or the commission merchant gambling on the fickleness of cotton futures. No matter what the price of cotton might be, the planter had to have his supplies. As a consequence, mortgages increased as debts mounted against him.

It was not uncommon for the planter to go for months without any cash even though he owned large amounts of acreage and had valuable crops in the field.²⁹ Often his factor or commission merchant advanced cash payments to overseers, advanced cash for the hiring out of slaves to another plantation, paid debts due other persons, and made many other advances to and for the planter.³⁰ Sometimes loans as small as twenty-five or fifty cents were advanced.³¹

Even though bagging, rope, cloth, coffee, and bacon apparently were the most frequent plantation purchases, sundries of various kinds were nearly always included. The firm of Laudaman and Sheffield offered a variety of services in addition to general merchandise. Some of the accounts from this firm read, “to digging grave, furnishing plank, \$10, to making coffin \$30; to keeping mare 5 weeks for Jesse Hines, deceased, no charge.”³² Jesse Willis, Turbot Betton, Robert Butler, and other well-known persons had accounts with Laudaman and Sheffield. Some of these accounts were not paid and had to be taken to court for collection. An interesting complaint against this firm made in 1831 states that the “small coffin and rough box that Laudaman charged \$15 for was not worth 75 cents.”³³ However, Laudaman and Sheffield had printed on their

28. Russel, “Economic Aspects of Southern Sectionalism,” pp. 101, 103-4.

29. Gray, *History of Agriculture*, 1:460.

30. Probate records, dated 1845-60, Gadsden, Hamilton, Jefferson, Leon, and Madison counties. Plantation accounts with merchants and factors found among estate inventories have proved to be the best sources for information on the factorage system.

31. Jordan, *Hugh Davis*, p. 120.

32. An account book from the firm of Laudaman and Sheffield Esquires, dated 1829, Leon County.

33. A letter written to W. I. Laudaman, dated 1831, Leon County.

account book, "Never insult the unfortunate, especially when they implore relief or assistance. If you cannot grant their requests, refuse them mildly and tenderly."

The method of paying an account with a factor was quite simple. The planter ordered the necessary supplies and they were charged against his account with the yearly interest added. If the merchant was also a factor and handled his cotton, the commission charged for this service was entered against the planter's account. If the planter dealt with a cotton factor who was not his commission merchant, the merchant usually forwarded the bill to the factor for payment, charging a commission for this service.

At any rate, the whole system was most inefficient, for the planter paid a high interest charge in addition to a high price for supplies which would have been cheaper had he been able to pay cash.³⁴ The commission merchant always kept his ledger sheets itemized and up to date, indicating the standing of a particular planter at a given time. When the planter's cotton was sold, the merchant sent him a bill of sale indicating the number of pounds (of cotton) involved in the transaction. Also included in the bill was an itemized list of charges made, which, when deducted, showed the net profit to the owner. Cash payments to the merchant for amounts owed by the planter seem to have been rare, and accounts were extended yearly or longer, depending on the success of the planter's crops.³⁵

Supplies for plantations in Florida, such as shoes, blankets, hats, bagging, rope, muslin, drugs, and other items were shipped in from

34. Jordan, *Hugh Davis*, p. 123; Lewis E. Atherton, "The Problem of Credit Rating in the Ante-Bellum South." Atherton studied records of a country storekeeper in the Old South and found that two-thirds to three-fourths of the goods was sold to the planter on credit. Just before the Civil War, there was \$131,000,000 credit extended planters by factors. Philip S. Foner, *Business and Slavery: The New York Merchants and the Irrepressible Conflict*, shows how the South depended upon the North for credit. The New York business house would contact the local lawyer or storekeeper to check the credit rating of the planter before extending credit for merchandise from New York. The local lawyer acted as a collecting agency for New York and charged a commission. It was necessary for the southerner to have a letter of recommendation from the lawyer to receive credit when shopping in New York. After the panic of 1837, this informal system of credit changed and credit agencies were established in the South, though they were not effective until after the Civil War.

35. Francis J. Ross' estate account with John B. Spencer, commission merchant at White Springs, extended from April 15, 1858, to February 11, 1862. Usually accounts did not extend this long and were settled at the end of a year and a half, as shown by probate records in the various counties.

the gulf ports of Apalachicola, Cedar Key, and St. Marks to general stores located at Marianna, Quincy, Tallahassee, Monticello, Madison, and White Springs. The stores played an important role in the financial life of the planter, for they took his cotton or established credit on his crop before it matured, supplying him with commodities necessary for the plantation.

One such store in Middle Florida was the firm of Smallwood, Gibson, and Harris, located at Quincy. This firm served as cotton factor and commission merchant for Oscar Fillyaw. Fillyaw's account with Smallwood, Gibson, and Harris lists purchases necessary for the supply of a plantation and advances made against its crops. Since the firm acted as merchant and factor for Fillyaw, an interest rate of $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent was charged for purchases made and cash paid out for plantation expense, and a rate of 6 per cent was charged for handling Fillyaw's cotton. Examples of entries in the firm's ledger dated 1851 are: "cash to pay Dr. Jarrett, \$15; cash paid C. M. Harris bill for bacon from New Orleans, 6 mos., \$180; cash paid Harris and Lines bill for storage and frt., \$16; amount paid boy, \$1.00." Other entries show supplies purchased for the plantation such as osnaberg, kersey, whiskey, gunny bagging, blankets, shoes, "colonial" coffee, and castor oil. For the period January 1 to December 23, 1851, Fillyaw's (now deceased) account with Smallwood, Gibson, and Harris for plantation supplies, cash paid out for plantation operation, and commissions (or interest) charged for handling cotton and the plantation account totaled \$1,486. The firm sold Fillyaw's cotton and credited his estate with the proceeds amounting to \$4,007. The amount due the firm was then deducted from the cotton proceeds, leaving a balance due the estate of \$2,521.³⁶

The firm of Smallwood, Gibson, and Harris dissolved. Smallwood went to Tallahassee and opened his own business while Harris, as J. R. Harris and Company, continued to operate at Quincy as cotton factor and commission merchant. William E. Kilcrease's account with Harris was considerably larger than Fillyaw's. Harris supplied Kilcrease's two plantations (one was in lower Georgia) while selling his cotton and tobacco.³⁷ It was not unusual for planter

36. An inventory and appraisalment of the estate of Oscar Fillyaw, dated 1850-54 (no file number), Gadsden County.

37. An inventory and appraisalment of the estate of William E. Kilcrease, dated 1856-64 (no file number), Gadsden County; see Alfred H. Stone, "The

and factor to have a close friendship with each other. Kilcrease felt such a friendship for Harris. He directed in his will that his crops be turned over to Harris "that he may from the proceeds reimburse himself for all advances received by me through his kindness."³⁸

Kilcrease's account with Harris exemplifies the manner in which the merchant financed the planter. Harris acted as banker for Kilcrease. All money transactions were made through Harris; he paid notes and interest due for Kilcrease and advanced Kilcrease cash on his crops. From July 1859 to April 1860, Kilcrease's account with Harris amounted to \$22,434. The amount of cotton and tobacco sold is not shown on Harris' ledger sheets. A notation, dated May 1860, lists \$2,313 as the balance due Harris, the remainder of Kilcrease's account having been paid. Typical entries made by Harris read, "To commissions on advances, \$250; to D. G. Raney, charges on 119 bales of cotton, \$488.82; cash handed you, \$5.00; cash handed you, \$150.00; cash paid bal. of int. to Telegraph, \$50.00; To A. K. Allison for your draft on us, \$5,238.57." Other stores in Quincy which catered to planters in the general area and offered "yankee notions" of every description were A. L. Smith and Company and Munroe Muse and Company. Kilcrease traded with both these firms and was charged the usual commission of 2½ per cent. Entries on Kilcrease's account with Munroe Muse and Company read, "To A. L. Smith for Mr. Boykin's note against Fenley, \$117.32; one colt pistol, \$10.00; one pair black silk gloves, \$1.00; one umbrella, \$2.25." A credit of \$32 was deducted from Kilcrease's total bill of \$99 for "hides auctioned" by Munroe Muse and Company.³⁹

Leon County planters shipped their cotton from St. Marks to New York through a commission merchant at Tallahassee. John W. Cotten and James Whitehead are representative of the planters who

Cotton Factorage System of the Southern States." Stone writes that the factorage system existed before 1800; only after cotton became important did the factor appear at Charleston, Savannah, Mobile, and other southern ports. The factor sold only cotton; the commission merchant bought or sold anything for the planter. They were often one and the same.

38. *Record of Wills*, Book 6, p. 1005, Gadsden County.

39. An inventory and appraisal of the estate of William E. Kilcrease, dated 1856-64 (no file number), Gadsden County; D. J. Raney was a factor at Apalachicola. Among the manuscripts in Kilcrease's file is a bill of sale showing fifty-six bales of cotton shipped direct to Liverpool by D. J. Raney, in the bark *I. A. Bishop*.

did this. The following is a bill of sale for thirty-one bales of cotton sold from John W. Cotten's (deceased) plantation in 1856, showing the net amount received by Cotten's estate after charges for handling the cotton were deducted:

Account Sales for 31 Bales Cotton Rec'd, per Bark *Culloma*
from St. Marks and sold per Acc't. and risk of the Estate of
J. W. Cotten

Dec. 11, Cash, Utica Mills *Est JWC Blwg*, 16449 lbs. @ 12 1/8
\$1,994.44

Charges

Marine Insurance	\$ 29.85	
Freight on 16610 lbs. @ 5/8, \$109, Exp.		
\$4.38, Weighing \$2.48	115.86	
Cartage, \$3.87, Labor, \$3.88		
Storage, \$3.87, Barkage, \$3.88	15.50	
Fire Insurance, \$4.98, Weighing, \$2.48,		
Mending, \$2.17	9.63	
Commissions 2 1/2 %	49.86	220.70
Nett [<i>sic</i>] pct. due Dec. 26th E.E.		\$1,773.74
New York December 26, 1856		

Smallwood Anderson & Co.⁴⁰

Factors and merchants encouraged planters to grow a better grade of cotton and to gin and pack their cotton more carefully to cut down waste and loss. Factors representing the firm of Smallwood Anderson and Company in New York were so pleased over twenty-eight bales of cotton sent them by A. E. Lea, a Florida planter, that they requested that Lea's commission merchant in Tallahassee publish their complimentary letter with the hope of stimulating others to follow Lea's example. The firm wrote:

We yesterday advised sale for account of A. E. Lea, 28 bales of cotton at 11 1/4 cts. We think Mr. Lea deserves a complimentary notice for his superior production and which may stimulate an emulation by his neighbors . . . we hope you will take some interest in bringing Mr. Lea before the public as we con-

40. *Book of Sales of Personal Estates, 1846-1860*, p. 244, Leon County. The above figures do not include transportation charges to St. Marks. Many planters hauled their cotton to the port, avoiding freight charges from Tallahassee. Others hauled it as far as the railroad warehouse at Tallahassee to have it transported. In either instance, the cotton moved through a merchant who charged his commission, entering the amount in his ledger book along with other services and supplies rendered the planter.

sider him a benefactor to the cotton interests and a credit to your state. If we could get annually 1,000 bales of such cotton as that raised by Mr. Lea it would at once give a character to St. Marks cotton . . . a few such planters as Lea would make St. Marks cotton as desirable as New Orleans.⁴¹

The Florida planters' system of lending money and securing notes for other planters, small-scale farmers, and industrial interests was a lucrative business. A rate of interest of 6 to 10 per cent was charged and the net return on large amounts loaned out was profitable. In some instances, the planter sold his cotton to a local buyer, securing the buyer's note at a rate of interest. Abraham Bellamy made such a transaction in 1839 when he sold seventy-six bales of cotton to Darius Williams in Monticello for \$5,560 (32,708 pounds at 17 cents). Williams did not pay for the cotton; he gave Bellamy a note secured by Martin Palmer. The rate of interest was 8 per cent per annum for the first year and 10 per cent thereafter. When Williams paid the note in 1846, the amount due was \$9,187. Bellamy's estate made a profit of \$3,627 on the transaction.⁴² Another similar transaction was made in 1839 when Williams and Martin Palmer bought fifty-five bales of "upland cotton" from John Bellamy (Abraham's father). This lot of cotton (21,882 pounds at 17 cents) sold for \$3,720. Bellamy secured Williams' and Palmer's notes due in a year at 8 per cent interest.⁴³

The Bellamy family dealt directly with their factor in New York, the firm of Taylor and Ritch. This firm acted as factor and commission merchant. Two of Abraham Bellamy's daughters, Theodosia and Victoria, who attended school in New York, received their spending allowances from the firm, and all of their expenses, such as traveling to and from New York and their maintenance, education, and support while at school in New York, were paid by the firm. Entries made by Taylor and Ritch in their ledger books for expenses incurred by Theodosia and Victoria reveal that the cost of boarding school and the demands made by young people during the 1850s were little different than today.

Expenses paid by Taylor and Ritch for the two girls included

41. Tallahassee *Floridian and Journal*, February 17, 1855.

42. A bill of sale and due note found among the Abraham Bellamy estate papers, file 59, Jefferson County.

43. A bill of sale and due note found among the John Bellamy estate papers, file 33-43, Jefferson County.

such items as: "Godey and Leslie Magazines, \$6.00; For Tiffany and Co., \$134.50; For amount paid to herself, \$50.00; For expense covering trunk insurance, cartage, \$26.81; Bill for washing, \$9.99; Arnold Constable & Co., \$389.89; For Madame Aubrey, \$13.75; For I. A. Paul, \$2,500." Theodosia's total expenses while at boarding school in New York from April 1856 to June 1857 amounted to \$3,389. This total included \$165 interest and commission charged by the firm for handling Theodosia's account for the period involved. Victoria's expenses from August 1858 to September 1859 amounted to \$4,839, and \$213 of the total was interest and commissions charged.⁴⁴ Taylor and Ritch kept a separate account for all cotton sold from Abraham and John Bellamy's estates for the Bellamy children who were beneficiaries.

Sometimes a cotton grower was simultaneously commission merchant and planter. Reddin W. Parramore of Madison County was both. In addition to his two plantations from which he received profitable returns, he owned half partnership in a mercantile business with L. B. Thomas at Madison. Parramore, though a commission merchant, had a factorage house in New York, the firm of Madison and Company, to sell his cotton. The inventory of Parramore's assets at the time of his death in 1851 shows net proceeds amounting to \$4,656 due him by the firm for selling his cotton.⁴⁵

The firm of John B. Spencer at White Springs was typical of the general merchandise store which catered to the planter, supplying all of his needs. The account of Francis J. Ross with Spencer exemplifies the services rendered by the merchant. Ross' purchases of plantation supplies in 1860, included shoes for his Negroes, straw hats for them to wear in summer (one and a half dozen at a time for thirty cents apiece), one dozen bottles of wine at twelve cents a bottle, onions, potatoes, tomatoes, bacon, flour, lard, salt, cutlery, nails, hoes, harnesses, raisins, cheese, and butter. Spencer's firm also made cash advances for Ross and charged these to his bill. These entries read: "Cash paid repairs on buggy, \$30.83; cash to Smiley and Moore, \$21.00; cash sent to Mr. Reice, \$115." When Ross died in 1861, Spencer supplied the cash, lumber, and black velvet for his coffin. The cash was advanced to Cribbs and Mobley for making the coffin while the lumber and velvet were supplied by Spencer. The total cost of the coffin, \$25.20, was charged to Ross. His son,

44. Ibid.

45. *Record Book of Annual Returns*, pp. 36, 92, 95, Madison County.

General William B. Ross, paid a portion of this amount in cash and the remainder by ginning 387 pounds of cotton for Spencer.⁴⁶

Spencer continued to supply the plantation after Ross' death and made cash advances for various services until March 1862. Cash advances included: "Amount paid D. L. Duke, Overseer, \$284.65; Hire of boy Peter, 6 mos @ \$35.00, \$210.00; Cato for 7 mos. @ \$20.00, \$140.00; Cash for 12 beef cattle @ \$12.00, \$144.00." Spencer was the typical merchant who supplied the plantation, advanced cash for the planter, and charged his commission of 2½ per cent. Ross' account with Spencer from April 1858 through March 1862 amounted to \$3,823. Ross had a credit of \$959 for payments made to Spencer in hides, cotton, corn, mules, and a small amount of cash. The balance due at the end of the four-year period was \$2,864. Ross also had an account with the firm of D. J. and J. W. Sheffield at White Springs. This account is interesting, considering that Ross was a widower. From January through December 1860 most of the items purchased by Ross were women's and children's clothing, accessories, toys, and medicine such as "11 yds. velvet ribbon, \$1.82; 2 pr. wo's Booties, \$2.76; 8 yds. print, \$1.20; 3 pr. Misses Booties, \$3.00; 3½ yds. blk. Doe Skin Cassimere, \$3.50; 1 pr. ladies blk. Guitors [*sic*], \$1.63; 1 wax doll, .50; 1 pr. child's kid shoes, .88; 1 bottle worm S. drops, .38."⁴⁷

Factors and merchants advertised in Florida newspapers offering their services to planters. In 1838, J. F. Davis advertised in a Tallahassee newspaper, announcing the opening of a factorage house in New York:

The subscriber informs his friends and public that he has commenced business as cotton broker and commission merchant in the city of New York and is now prepared to receive cotton and other produce which he will dispose of on commission.

J. F. Davis

60 Waters St., New York

References: R. W. Williams and Sam Reid at Tallahassee

James Lanier & Co. at Quincy

John B. Collins at Monticello

William J. Bailey at Magnolia

William G. Porter at Apalachicola

Craig and Daffin at St. Joseph⁴⁸

46. Francis J. Ross' estate papers (no file number), Hamilton County.

47. *Ibid.*

48. Tallahassee *Florida Watchman*, February 17, 1838.

Another advertisement placed in the same issue of the newspaper offered cash advances on cotton if it were stored for shipment at Magnolia:

The subscribers still continue the storage and commission business at this place and will advance CASH ON COTTON stored with them for shipment to New York, New Orleans, or Charleston, and attend with promptness . . . all business entrusted to their care. Their charges:

Storage for cotton for season, .25 per bale

Marking and weighing each, $.6\frac{1}{4}$ per bale

Filling up Bills of Lading per sett [*sic*], .50

First months storage on goods, $.12\frac{1}{2}$ per bush.

Each succeeding month, $.6\frac{1}{4}$

Benjamin Bird & Co.

Though the panic of 1837 caused insolvency among factors and merchants, these firms became more numerous than ever when economic conditions improved throughout the South. After 1845, firms who wanted cotton to sell filled Florida newspapers with advertisements aimed at planters. F. R. Ely, whose firm was in Marianna, Jackson County, offered "cash advances on all cotton shipped on the barge *General Taylor* and placed in my charge with orders for insurance, consigned to my friends in Apalachicola, at usual rates." ⁴⁹ At Tallahassee, D. C. Wilson advertised for 3,000 bales of cotton in 1851 and offered "liberal cash advances" on the cotton if it was "shipped to [his] friends in New York." ⁵⁰

Factors and merchants at New Orleans, Charleston, and Savannah sometimes had agreements with planters in Florida who acted as agents for them. The firm of Post and Mel in New Orleans advertised in Tallahassee newspapers suggesting that Florida planters "refer to Thomas J. Perkins and Company at Tallahassee, J. R. Harris and Company at Quincy, Denham and Palmer at Monticello, and Beard and Denham at St. Marks" when selling their cotton. Another New Orleans factor, Nathaniel Hamlen, had as his Tallahassee agent in 1859 former governor James E. Broome. Other persons who acted as agents for Hamlen were A. B. Noyes and R. M. Spencer at Newport, John J. Snelling at Quincy, "General"

49. Marianna *Florida Whig*, January 6, 1849; Tallahassee *Florida Sentinel*, January 30, 1855; Tallahassee *Floridian and Journal*, April 5, 1856.

50. Tallahassee *Florida Sentinel*, December 2, 1851.

William Bailey at Monticello, J. G. Putnam at Madison, and Daniel Bell at Jasper.⁵¹

The firm of James Gadsden and Company at Charleston acted as factors and commission merchants for Middle Florida planters. Another Charleston firm, Walters and Walker, were factors, commission merchants, and agents for "The Pioneer Line of Packets" which ran between Charleston and Newport, Florida. The firm of William M. Tunno, with offices in Charleston and Savannah, acted as factors and commission merchants for planters in lower Georgia and Middle Florida.⁵²

The cotton weigher's position was an important one and he was respected within the community. When Florida became a state, provision was made by the General Assembly to have the governor appoint certain persons from time to time to serve as public cotton weighers. Usually the appointment was made upon recommendation of interested persons in the area. The merchant and planter had to have confidence in the cotton weigher. Apalachicola was such a thriving port that six cotton weighers were appointed to serve that area in 1846.⁵³

In certain instances, cotton weighers were merchants. This dual role enhanced their position and they seldom wanted to relinquish their appointments as weighers. William H. Hughes, a weigher at Apalachicola, petitioned Governor Thomas Brown in 1853 to have his appointment as weigher renewed. Hughes had recommendations from "buyers and sellers" at Apalachicola and friends in Tallahassee who would vouch for his "honesty and capabilities." John F. Broome, brother of Governor Broome, was a cotton weigher in Tallahassee.⁵⁴

If business centers were short of weighers at the height of the season when cotton was moving, much delay and inconvenience resulted. A letter written by T. J. Eppes to Governor Madison S. Perry in 1859 from Apalachicola recommended that Reuben L. Harrison be appointed cotton weigher to relieve the situation caused by the shortage of weighers. Eppes assured Perry that "one of our

51. Tallahassee *Floridian and Journal*, August 6, 1859, February 25, 1854.

52. Tallahassee *Florida Sentinel*, June 19, 1855.

53. Petitions from the citizens of Apalachicola for the appointment of cotton weighers, dated January 9, 10, 1846, mss., Secretary of State's Office, Tallahassee.

54. A letter to Governor Thomas Brown from William H. Hughes, dated January 20, 1853, ms., Secretary of State's Office, Tallahassee.

first and largest commission houses joined in the request for the appointment. At times, some one or two of the cotton weighers have been taken sick during the press of the business season, leaving too few to attend to the weighing.”⁵⁵

Apalachicola was the largest cotton outlet along the Gulf, east of Mobile. Merchants and factors at Apalachicola handled and sold cotton for planters in Alabama, Georgia, and the western portion of Middle Florida. In 1849, between \$2 million and \$3 million worth of cotton passed through the port, and the figure rose considerably after 1850. Apalachicola merchants vied with those of other Gulf ports for the cotton trade of Alabama and western Georgia.

In 1844, the General Assembly of Territorial Florida passed an act prohibiting the circulation of “change bills” or bills of exchange to be used as money. There were no banks and this prohibition made difficult the usual process of offering planters cash advances on cotton. To keep the cotton moving and to finance the planter, merchants and factors were supplied bills of exchange by agencies, located at Apalachicola, St. Marks, and Tallahassee, which represented banks in Georgia and South Carolina. In 1848, merchants and factors at Apalachicola petitioned the General Assembly to repeal the act prohibiting the circulation of “change bills.” Their reasons are best described in their own words:

Your memorialists in asking such repeal, would respectfully impress upon your Honorable body the fact that they are without any available currency wherewith to effect negotiations to the amount of nearly three millions of dollars and their ability to effect the business operations of the season, will depend, mainly, if not entirely, upon the facilities to be granted by the [bank] agencies. Your memorialists further show that over two million dollars of this money is paid to citizens of Georgia and Alabama who require a currency at par in their own States, and that as the bills issued by the said agencies are redeemable [*sic*] in specie and circulate at par in the States where the money is carried and in which it is to be used, the same is preferred by the holders of cotton and is the only available means wherewith your memorialists can hope to carry out their merchantile [*sic*] operations. If the said doubts should not be removed, the owners or holders of cotton would be forced to effect their sales and

55. A letter to Governor Madison S. Perry from T. J. Eppes, dated November 24, 1857, ms., Secretary of State's Office, Tallahassee.

obtain their advances at Columbus, Eufaula, Fort Gaines and other points upon the Chattahoochie, thus depriving your memorialists of a large and important part of their business . . . occurring at a time when a rivalry is springing up between the Atlantic and Gulf ports for the control and shipment of the crops made on the upper portion of the Chattahoochie. A tendency will be given to the diversion of the principal trade of this City, the effect of which will in all probability [*sic*] prove disastrous to its future prosperity, thus involving the interest of all classes in the community as well as your memorialists.⁵⁶

Like Apalachicola, Tallahassee was a bustling center, the hub for Middle Florida cotton planters. During the summer months, which were usually dull, merchants went to northern markets to purchase supplies for the coming season. By September they were ready for a bristling fall trade. During the 1850s, a fall scene in downtown Tallahassee was described by a contemporary:

The streets of our city are becoming more and more lively as the business season progresses. The mule team and wagon so long regarded as a peculiar institution of Tallahassee, still maintains its ground and is now evincing a disposition, as heretofore, of taking possession of the streets this fall. Our merchants . . . have returned and their familiar faces appear in the business haunts, giving welcome assurance that the dull season is passing away.⁵⁷

Supplying planters and marketing their cotton was a profitable business, and the factorage system was the financial arrangement upon which it was based. That the system enriched the factor and merchant is evidenced by the various charges made for handling cotton, financing the planter, and supplying his needs. The system by no means deprived the planter of his share of the profits from his crops, though a contrary concept has often been suggested by contemporary travelers and economic historians of the twentieth century.

56. A petition to the General Assembly of Florida from the citizens of Apalachicola, dated December 9, 1848, ms., Secretary of State's Office, Tallahassee.

57. Tallahassee *Floridian and Journal*, October 3, 1857.

An Appraisal

An enormous amount of literature has been written on slavery in the Old South and a variety of interpretations presented. To understand the complexities of the slave system the student should be familiar with the views of such historians as Herbert Aptheker, Frederic Bancroft, John Spencer Bassett, Avery O. Craven, John Hope Franklin, Eugene D. Genovese, Lewis C. Gray, Ulrich B. Phillips, William D. Postell, William K. Scarborough, Kenneth M. Stampp, Charles S. Sydnor, and Richard C. Wade.

Of the general works on slavery, the studies of Phillips and Stampp remain the most thorough and complete, though these two scholars disagree concerning the economics of slavery. Phillips minimizes profits from slave labor while Stampp makes them the economic stimulant sustaining slavery. Genovese challenges the revisionist view of Stampp and others that slavery was plantation capitalism. Instead, Genovese applies the Marxist dialectic process of two civilizations locked in combat: the South in conflict with the capitalist mentality of the North and the West.

Scarborough has re-examined the role of the overseer and revised his image so that he is no longer stereotyped as ignorant, uncouth, and completely without compassion for the slave. Wade's study of slavery in the cities supplies a much needed aspect since slavery was urban as well as rural, while Postell's study gives an excellent account of the health of slaves on plantations. Bancroft's treatment of the domestic slave trade continues to be the best account of this activity.

The "profitability" debate concerning slavery has gone on since antebellum days. Harold D. Woodman points out the conflicting conclusions of historians which "often reflect differing definitions of the problem" resulting from their approach to it, that is, whether they are evaluating the profits for individual slaveholders in terms of a business enterprise or evaluating the effect of slavery on the whole South as "an economic system rather than as a business enterprise." When slavery is viewed as an economic system "the issue of profits earned by individual planters is subordinated to the larger problems of economic growth, capital accumulation, and the effect of slavery on the general population."¹

Quite naturally, proslavery writers of the antebellum South were hesitant to defend slavery as an individual profit-making business (since this would admit to exploitation and was inconsistent with the general condition of economic backwardness), but rather upheld the system as a benevolent institution. At the same time, their opponents from the North were hesitant to attack an individual profit-making business (since their Yankee ideology upheld the profit motive), but rather attacked the problem as a moral and economic blight upon the total population of the South.²

Cassius M. Clay, in his antebellum Kentucky newspaper, the Lexington *True American*, condemned slavery as a labor system for the South because it was "economically destructive." Free white laborers of the South "were faced by the competition of slave labor, and their wages never exceeded the subsistence level which was the pay accorded slaves. When whites did not work and slaves were kept ignorant, skill or excellence could not develop." Slave labor was economically expensive since capital was frozen in labor, stifling economic development. Hinton R. Helper, in a report taken from the census figures of 1850 (with some alterations), contended that wealth in agriculture and property was much greater in the free states than in the slave states. (He omitted slave values.) He also compared commercial and industrial growth of the North with the lack of such growth in the South and concluded that the slave states were retarded economically because of slavery. J. E. Cairnes, the British economist, agreed with Clay and Helper that slavery was the cause of general economic poverty in the South. "Slaves were kept in ignorance and were thus unable to cope with

1. "The Profitability of Slavery: A Historical Perennial," pp. 303-4.

2. Ibid.

machinery. If educated and brought to the cities as industrial workers, the danger of their combining to better their conditions or of their engaging in insurrection was increased.”³

The proslavery writers argued that slavery was beneficial to the economy of the nation and the world. With the use of slave labor, the South supplied “cotton for manufacture into cloth and clothing, stimulating commerce and industry” in the North and in Europe. David Christy defended slavery as the “agency, intermediate, between the grain growing states and our foreign commerce.” J. D. B. De Bow went further to show that the merchant class (the nonslaveholder) of the South and the white laborers benefited from slavery. The merchants “handled the goods produced by slave labor” and the white laborer was “not forced to work in unhealthy shops as was his white brother in the North; and most important of all, he had the opportunity of becoming a slaveholder and by so doing relieved himself and his wife of drudgery in the fields.”⁴

Frederick Olmsted and Solon Robinson, observing slavery as contemporary travelers, reported that profits from slave labor were meager. These two men were evaluating slavery as a business enterprise while viewing plantation operations of individual owners. Olmsted thought profits were slight because planters were poor managers and lacked self-sufficiency. Instead of diversifying crops, they “applied their labor only to cotton” while they constantly complained that the price of cotton remained so low there was no profit in growing it.⁵

Robinson’s conclusion, though faulty, is more realistic; he used as an example to reinforce his views the earnings of a sugar plantation in Louisiana. The estate consisted of 1,600 acres, 201 slaves, a mansion house, and the usual equipment and livestock, at a value of \$206,265. Annual gross returns from sugar averaged from \$30,000 to \$40,000. To show that profit was negligible, Robinson calculated interest at 8 per cent on the value of the estate. This interest, amounting to \$16,501, he called an expense of the estate. He estimated the costs for Negro clothing, food, and other expenses of the plantation at \$9,419, and these estimates are rather high. Thus, it would appear that net income was low, but in reality net income

3. *Ibid.*, pp. 305-7.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 310.

5. *A Journey in the Seaboard Slave States*, p. 379.

averaged somewhere between \$20,000 and \$30,000 if annual returns less maintenance and operating costs can be defined as profit.⁶

The views of contemporary travelers undoubtedly influenced the thinking of later historians. Sydnor, for example, to support his conclusion that slavery was not profitable, used a Mississippi cotton plantation (hypothetical) of average size with fifty slaves; then, as Robinson had done a century earlier, to minimize profits, Sydnor charged interest upon the estimated value of the estate, deducting this interest from gross income along with other costs for operating the estate. The flaw in Sydnor's thesis is that if land, slaves, and improvements on the land should be considered as investments, then only maintenance costs of land and slaves should be considered operational costs to be deducted from the gross income from the estate.

Sydnor also charged depreciation on land and slaves, as Robinson had, instead of showing growth of the estate resulting from improvements on the land and the natural increase in Negroes through birth. Both these assets should be thought of as capital gain instead of depreciation. If planters borrowed to purchase land, which most did, interest paid on money borrowed could be charged as cost, but only this interest. Planters usually paid cash for Negroes and many times inherited Negroes, so charging interest or depreciation on Negroes is an unjust expense. Negroes did grow old and depreciate in value, though they continued to have menial tasks. Even so, the birth rate of Negroes more than compensated for this depreciation in value of the aged and infirm. Another condition to be considered which would refute the thinking of the Sydnor and Phillips school was the continued upward spiral in the value of land and slaves between 1845 and 1860.

Phillips, like Sydnor, believed that only in a few instances, where there was "exceptional managerial capability" involved, did planters earn "anything beyond what would cover their maintenance and carrying charges." Phillips based his evaluation on the increased prices of slaves during the 1850s, which he thought were out of all proportion to the amount of value produced. This conclusion is rather superficial, having been made without an adequate study of the values of estates, their operational costs, and net returns to owners.⁷ Since Phillips viewed slavery as an unprofitable

6. *Solon Robinson, Pioneer and Agriculturist*, 2:197-200.

7. *American Negro Slavery*, pp. 391-93.

system economically, he must explain its continued existence on noneconomic grounds. Thus, he turned to the idea of slavery as a means of race control: "As the number of slaves continued to rise, slavery became essential as the means of policing an inferior race, of controlling the savage instincts of the Negro."⁸

Among the historians who concluded that slavery was profitable are Lewis C. Gray, Orville W. Taylor, and Kenneth M. Stampp. Gray, whose history of southern agriculture continues to be the most comprehensive treatment in this area, was perhaps the first to challenge the established idea, put forth largely by the anti-slavery critics, that slavery was not profitable. Gray believed that by the 1850s, owners' profits were so attractive, because of the use of slave labor, that "the economic motives for the continuance of slavery from the standpoint of the employer were never so strong as in the years just preceding the Civil War."⁹

Orville W. Taylor, in the history of slavery in Arkansas, agrees with Gray and Stampp that slavery was profitable. More than this, Taylor traces the financial careers of several slaveowners in Arkansas for a period of years to show how these planters increased the values of their estates and prospered with the use of slave labor. The tremendous increase in agricultural wealth throughout the South, evidenced by the increase in numbers and values of plantations, slaveowners, and slaves between 1850 and 1860, was another indication of the profitability of slavery. Taylor maintained that the final evidence sustaining this view was the consistently high prices being paid for slaves in Arkansas, among the highest in the South: "Certainly planters and farmers would not have continued to buy slaves at high prices if they had not already made money, or if they did not have good reason to expect to make money with slave labor in the future."¹⁰

Stampp, like Taylor, thought that the employment of slaves must be profitable or "slaves would not continue to bring high prices in the market and masters would not continue to use them." Stampp also thought the "high valuation of Negro labor during the 1850s was the best and most direct evidence of the continued profitability of slavery."¹¹ Hiring rates ranged between 10 and 20 per cent of

8. Woodman, "Profitability of Slavery," p. 313.

9. Gray, *History of Agriculture*, 2:470-76.

10. *Negro Slavery in Arkansas*, pp. 118-30.

11. *The Peculiar Institution*, pp. 383, 414.

the slave's market value, depending upon the skill involved. These rates increased steadily, as evidenced by Florida records. In 1854, six Negroes were hired by the Orange Mill Company in Madison County, Florida, at the rate of \$172. In 1860, field hands were hired in Gadsden County at the rate of \$200 and, by 1864, the rate of hire had doubled.¹²

Slavery, as a business enterprise, was undoubtedly profitable for the owner. This was especially true in Florida, as examination of the records shows. The records are conclusive when studied carefully, since they represent the complete financial condition of the estate for a given year; they are annual accountings for the beneficiaries made by executors for estates of deceased planters. They include amounts paid for overseer's salaries and medical treatment for slaves, and the merchant's and/or factor's accounts with the estate. The merchant's ledger sheets are invaluable, since every transaction necessary for plantation operations is recorded along with commission and shipping charges. The records also include complete inventories of property values of the estate such as equipment, livestock, and slaves. The information gathered from such records, presented in chapter 7, is sufficient to serve as proof that cotton planting with slave labor was profitable in Florida.

The economic critics of slavery blamed the South's chronic problem of soil exhaustion upon the system of slave labor. "This form of labor," they argued, "was only adaptable to a one-crop system which used crude, unscientific methods and led relentlessly to soil exhaustion. Slaves were incapable of working with modern agricultural implements; lacking versatility, they could be taught little more than the routine operations required in the growth of a single staple." Soil exhaustion was a general problem and not a sectional one, since "many non-slaveholders, North and South, used the same wasteful methods in the cultivation of their farms."¹³

Though the government sponsored this irresponsible method of exhausting the soil and leaving it, southern planters became increasingly aware of the need for agricultural reform. The movement for reform began early in the nineteenth century, and, by 1850, was being practiced generally throughout the South. The trend toward

12. *Wills and Letters Testamentary*, Book BB, pp. 7-10, Madison County; William E. Kilcrease Estate, Gadsden County; Francis J. Ross Estate, Hamilton County.

13. Stampp, *The Peculiar Institution*, p. 394.

a more scientific approach was evident as planters diversified crops, plowed deep, ditched their fields for better drainage, used fertilizers and more modern implements, developed better strains of livestock through cross-breeding, and experimented to improve their cotton seed. Though the early-nineteenth-century reformers sparked the movement, noticeable efforts were made only after the panic of 1837 when cotton prices became so depressed that planters were willing to listen to the spokesmen for reform.¹⁴

John Taylor, Edmund Ruffin, and James M. Garnett were among the first to publicize their reform efforts, appealing to the agrarian to show the rewards to be gained through a more knowledgeable approach to agriculture. Taylor published the *Arator* in 1813, expounding upon the philosophy that the greatest problem facing agriculturists was the "diminishing fertility of land." Taylor advocated the use of artificial and natural fertilizers. He also recommended diversification of crops and subsoil plowing. Ruffin discovered that marl on his land possessed lime and, when used as fertilizer, almost doubled his crop yields. His *Essay on Calcareous Manures*, published in 1831, attracted wide attention and influenced many planters in the Tidewater regions to revive their worn-out lands by using lime to fertilize the soil.¹⁵

In 1832, Ruffin published the first issue of *The Farmers' Register*, a periodical that was read extensively by planters throughout the South. Valuable information pertaining to all aspects of plantation economy was exchanged through letters to the editor published in the *Register*. James M. Garnett contributed to the reform movement by encouraging agricultural societies and writing essays "urging Southerners to awaken to the realization of their shortcomings" and to adopt more advanced methods for cultivating the soil.¹⁶

Some other writers and publishers who encouraged reform and contributed to its success were John L. Skinner, Noah B. Cloud, and Daniel Lee. *The American Farmer*, first published in Baltimore by

14. James C. Bonner, "Advancing Trends in Southern Agriculture, 1840-1860."

15. Avery O. Craven, "The Agricultural Reformers of the Ante-Bellum South," pp. 303, 312. Other persons who contributed to the reform movement were Thomas Mann Randolph, Stephen McCormick, Fielding Lewis, Philip Tabb, John Singleton, William Meriwether, W. C. Nichols, and George Jefferys.

16. Avery O. Craven, *Edmund Ruffin Southerner, A Study in Secession*, pp. 50, 70.

Skinner in 1819, was the earliest of the agricultural periodicals.¹⁷ It was the organ through which reformers encouraged an exchange of ideas. The idea of establishing agricultural schools and employing chemists to study soil problems was first advocated by the *Farmer*. Skinner published the activities and proceedings of agricultural societies and wrote editorials encouraging reform. He also edited *The Plough, Loom, and Anvil* in 1849.¹⁸

Noah B. Cloud edited *The American Cotton Planter* from 1853 to 1861. This periodical, published in Montgomery, Alabama, was read by southern farmers and planters. Its constructive suggestions must have been helpful to many.¹⁹ *The Southern Cultivator*, perhaps the most widely read by Florida planters, was published at Augusta, Georgia, from 1843 to 1860. The *Cultivator*, edited successively by Jethro W. Jones, James Camak, and Daniel Lee, appealed particularly to the cotton growers of the Lower South.

The *Cultivator* encouraged planters to become more self-sufficient, to produce their own foodstuffs, to rotate their fields with renovating crops, and to enrich the soil with natural fertilizers such as cowpeas and cotton seed. Planters were encouraged to renew the soil rather than engage in the wasteful practice of depleting it and moving on to new land. The editors of the *Cultivator* refrained from engaging in the political controversies hinging upon slavery that caused other periodicals in the South to fold.²⁰

Florida planters were active participants in the reform movement. Richard K. Call and other prominent slaveowners met at Tallahassee in 1851 to propose a plan for cooperative action of all planters in the South to control the price of cotton. In 1852, Call was one of sixty Florida delegates who met in New Orleans to consider plans for an industrial exhibition to be held there the following year.²¹ Other Floridians who participated actively in societies and conventions were Edward Bradford, John Branch, James E. Broome, Benjamin Chaires, Jr., William D. Moseley, John S. Shepard, Noah L. Thompson, and George Whitfield.²²

17. John L. Skinner, "Agricultural Reformer," *American Agriculturist* 10 (1851):163.

18. Craven, "The Agricultural Reformers of the Ante-Bellum South," p. 310.

19. Elizabeth M. Essler, "The Agricultural Reform Movement in Alabama," pp. 49-54.

20. Moore, *Agriculture in Ante-Bellum Mississippi*, pp. 77-79.

21. Doherty, *Richard Keith Call*, p. 138.

22. Tallahassee *Florida Sentinel*, August 5, 1851.

In 1851, the Florida legislature resolved to establish a board of agriculture composed of three persons "resident at Tallahassee" and one member from each of the two senatorial districts. The duties of the board were "to collect and report at Tallahassee, by mail or otherwise, all information relating to the soil, production, and climate of their districts . . . to advance improvement in the art of cultivation, to encourage emigration, and in any way to promote the cause of agriculture."²³ Following the resolution to establish the board, the Committee on Agriculture reported: "Much of the cultivating in Florida is conducted without any reference to the preservation of the soil, by rotation of crops, or by manure. Instead, it chimes with the olden method of taxing a piece of land so long as it will produce, then leaving it for another. . . . Whilst the experience of every farmer will prove that the same labor is necessary to cultivate a poor soil as a good one, the result is entirely in favor of keeping up and sustaining the productive quality of the land by manure or otherwise." The committee urged Florida planters to become more progressive. An appeal was made to the youth of the state who, it was hoped, would realize the attractive profits to be made in agrarian pursuits and choose this as a profession rather than to "rush up the avenues to the various popular professions of the day such as the mercantile life." It should be remembered that during the "palmy days of Greece and Rome, the most eminent citizens, when sought for the Forum, or the Senate, were found at the plough."²⁴

Actually, many Florida planters did use the newer methods of cultivation advocated by the reformers. They diversified and rotated their crops, restoring fertility to the soil. They plowed deep, turning up the subsoil to get at earth not yet worn out by continuous cropping. They practiced contour plowing and hillside ditching, and used canals and ditches between furrows to insure adequate drainage.²⁵ John Finlayson and George Jones, two Jefferson County planters, used these modern methods at Glendower and El Destino, and the drainage canals can still be seen.²⁶

23. A bill to organize and establish a board of agriculture for the State of Florida, dated January 4, 1851, ms., Secretary of State's Office, Tallahassee.

24. Tallahassee *Florida Sentinel*, January 14, 1851.

25. *The American Cotton Planter* 3 (1855):44; Tallahassee *Florida Sentinel*, July 8, 1851.

26. Conversation with Edwin H. Finlayson, Ashville, Florida; observations made while visiting at Glendower and El Destino.

The movement for agricultural reform after 1837 was a direct result of the hardships endured in a depressed economy. As the movement gained strength, the planters saw as the most pressing problem that of protecting and controlling the price of their cotton. Antagonism toward the New York factor and merchant, who, it was thought, determined the price and claimed a large portion of the profit, expressed itself in a series of cotton planters' or commercial conventions whose spokesmen proposed to establish a co-operative arrangement designed to limit the production of cotton and protect its price.²⁷ With southerners controlling the market, direct trade with Europe would be established and the factor and merchant at New York eliminated.²⁸

It was estimated that millions of dollars were lost annually to the factor and merchant in commissions and other charges. For example, the cotton crop of 1838 was valued at \$47,238,870. Of this, freight, commissions, shipping, and insurance costs amounted to more than \$10 million, lost to "transporting and selling agents . . . all of whom lived north of the Potomac River." Southerners were "feeding from their own bosom a vast population of merchants, ship-owners, capitalists and others who were drinking up the life-blood of her trade."²⁹ The establishment of a direct export and import trade with other countries was the only means by which the southern states could hope to become commercially independent.

For southern merchants to carry on the business of direct importations on any extensive scale, commercial capital and credit must be extended by southern bankers to all of the southern states. To encourage foreign capital and credit, agents must be sent abroad to form partnerships with firms in Liverpool and con-

27. Gray, *History of Agriculture*, 2:925.

28. De Bow, *Industrial Resources*, 3:92; Weymouth T. Jordan, "Cotton Planters' Conventions in the Old South"; Tallahassee *Florida Sentinel*, August 5, 1851. One such proposal was the Florida Plan submitted by Leon County cotton planters at a convention at Macon, Georgia, in 1851. James E. Broome, chairman of the committee presenting the Florida Plan, recommended that a cotton planters' association be formed and subscribed to by planters from Alabama, Georgia, Florida, Louisiana, and South Carolina. The association was to have a working capital of \$20 million and was to own and operate its own warehouses at Charleston, Savannah, St. Marks, Apalachicola, Mobile, and New Orleans. The price of cotton would be controlled and direct shipments abroad would eliminate the great amount of money lost annually to New York merchants and factors. The Florida Plan was adopted by the convention, though never carried out.

29. De Bow, *Industrial Resources*, 3:94.

tinental Europe. Lines of packet ships and steamers would serve the southern ports with merchandise, returning to Europe with cotton. A market for the imports was to be created in the South through an extensive internal improvement program involving the construction of canals, railroads, and turnpikes to reach the merchant in the interior. Commercial education must be encouraged among the youth to create a merchant class.³⁰

All these projected aims were voiced at the early conventions held during the 1830s. Between 1845 and 1856 commercial conventions were held at such cities as Baltimore, Charleston, Memphis, New Orleans, Richmond, and Savannah. The same high-sounding resolutions were heard at these conventions. After 1850, a stronger sectional feeling developed and the conventions became closely related to the secession movement. Sectional independence was advocated and plans were laid to export cotton directly to European manufacturers. Some groups among these advocates proposed to reopen the slave trade and acquire Cuba as a likely extension area for the plantation system.³¹

Europeans and southerners alike complained of Liverpool with her "monster warehouses" where cotton was stored and held from the market or placed on the market at certain propitious times to control the price. European manufacturers were as eager as southerners to break the Liverpool monopoly in order to bring about a more equal distribution of "power, capital, and wealth."³² In 1851, a movement was begun in Europe to create a continental depot for cotton sent directly from the South, bypassing Liverpool. Persons representing the movement discussed the plan with southerners, but it never materialized.³³

At a commercial convention in Savannah in 1856, delegates from Florida included Edward C. Cabell, former governor Thomas Brown, Edward Bradford, Thomas Hayward, and other prominent planters and businessmen. Delegates at this convention thought the time had come to "convince the world . . . that the Anglo-Saxons of the South had the same progressive faculties as those of the North," and that "Southerners must unite to achieve commercial independence." At this meeting, J. D. B. De Bow and other com-

30. *Ibid.*, p. 117.

31. *Ibid.*, pp. 100-116.

32. *Ibid.*, p. 120.

33. Tallahassee *Florida Sentinel*, March 1, 1853.

mittee members appealed "to the producers of four-fifths of the commerce of the nation" to develop their own resources to such an extent that their capital would no longer contribute "directly or indirectly . . . to the aggrandizement and commercial opulence of other sections of the Union."³⁴

Florida sent delegates to conventions at Knoxville and Montgomery in 1857 and 1858. At the Knoxville convention, De Bow was appointed permanent president of all future conventions. Some delegates proposed that the convention consider plans to reopen the slave trade. They thought the United States government should be forced to withdraw its squadron from the coast of Africa. Protests were made against free trade and direct taxation. Complaints were made about selling in the South merchandise which had come from free states which did not uphold the fugitive slave law, and against the discriminatory way in which the government favored northern ports when granting mail contracts to shipping lines.³⁵

At the Montgomery convention, resolutions to revive the slave trade took precedence over all other economic issues. Those who opposed such a move reminded its backers that the federal government would persist in declaring the trade illegal. These same men were disillusioned to think that their compatriots were more concerned with reopening the slave trade than with restoring the "lost trade, establishing manufactures, and driving out the Yankee conveniences." A Virginia editor commented on the delegates as they traveled to meet in Montgomery: "At night they will pull off a pair of Yankee boots with a Yankee bootjack; and throwing a lot of Yankee toggery on a Yankee chair, lie down to dream of Southern independence in a Yankee bed with not even a thread of cotton around them that has not gone through a Yankee loom, or out of a Yankee shop."³⁶

Though "Yankee notions" were typical accessories, southerners were now determined to break the hold of northern merchants upon their economy. In 1859, New Orleans merchants organized the Southern Direct Trade Association with an agent in Belgium to represent their interests abroad.³⁷ By 1860, many southerners had

34. Tallahassee *Floridian and Journal*, November 22, 1856; *The Southern Cultivator* 14 (1856):373.

35. Tallahassee *Floridian and Journal*, July 25 and August 22, 1857.

36. *Ibid.*, May 22, 1858.

37. *Ibid.*, February 4, 1860.

canceled accounts with northern merchants and manufacturers. These cancellations were noticeable: the firm of A. T. Steward and Company in New York complained that it was necessary to discharge "over fifty clerks" because of the "withdrawal" of southern orders and the "great falling off" of southern trade. Other northern firms complained that merchants "below Mason and Dixon's line" were afraid to buy from the North for fear "it would leak out at home" and they would be ruined since southerners were so enraged "by recent incendiary proceedings at the North."³⁸

The commercial conventions encouraged efforts to create an industrial economy in the South. At one convention, John G. Gamble, Leon County planter, recommended that cotton factories be established "in every county in the cotton states—these factories to commence with spinning; and afterwards connecting the business of weaving the cloth." Gamble doubted that Negro labor should be used. Instead, he thought the "piney wood" white population who were scattered throughout the countryside, subsisting by hunting and raising stock, should be used as the laboring force. This group, "an ignorant and irreligious population, ignorant of even the alphabet" would be supplied schools and churches near the cotton factories in which they worked.³⁹

Achille Murat described these poor whites (squatters and crackers) in Florida for whom he had little regard: "They are generally not very industrious, and not possessing the means of buying lands, live upon those of others, and work them until they are expelled by the proprietors. Their poverty is entirely the fruit of their idle and drunken habits . . . every dispute is amicably terminated by the fist."⁴⁰ Ellen Long also described them in unflattering terms: "We speculated as we passed a miserable log hut where sat a wretched woman with a snuff brush in her mouth while her yoke fellow sprawled full length on the dilapidated porch, happy for the time in sleep. Five or six emaciated children, rolling in the sand, and a sow with half starved pigs, were the only living objects in view."⁴¹

General William Bailey, like John G. Gamble a staunch advocate of southern economic independence, financed construction of

38. Ibid., January 21, 1860.

39. De Bow, *Industrial Resources*, 1:139.

40. Hanna, *A Prince in Their Midst*, p. 87.

41. *Florida Breezes*, p. 170.

the Monticello Cotton Mill in 1851. The mill was one of the first real industrial experiments in Florida. Bailey employed 65 white laborers and operated 1,500 spindles. During the Civil War the factory continued to operate with a personal loss to Bailey estimated at \$300,000.⁴² Southerners generally thought that manufacturing should be reserved for free white laborers, that "removing slaves from farms and plantations would undermine the peculiar institution," though slaves could be employed profitably as was demonstrated in Virginia's tobacco factories. The Tredegar Iron Company in Richmond employed slaves almost exclusively after white laborers struck against the company to protest the use of slave labor.⁴³

Industrial development in Florida during the ten years prior to the Civil War resulted in various types of manufactured products. In 1851, at Apalachicola, John Gorrie invented a machine for making ice, and the port city and surrounding areas were supplied regularly from his plant. There were factories in the plantation belt manufacturing boots and shoes and two manufacturing clothing; there was also a salt factory in Monroe County. Agricultural implements, machinery, steam engines, carriages, saddles, harnesses, wagons, and carts were produced. There were also a number of blacksmith shops and foundries where tin, copper, and sheet-iron were turned out. The total capital invested in industrial enterprises by 1860 was \$1,874,125. The number of persons employed in industry was 2,454, and the total wages for the year 1860 were \$619,840 (an average of \$250 per person). The total value of manufactured products in 1860 was \$2,447,969, a spectacular increase in value from the 1850 total of \$668,335.⁴⁴

The growth of manufactures resulted from the active participation of Florida planters in the movement to establish southern economic independence. This growth was general throughout the South. Though it was spectacular, in no way was it comparable to the growth and increase in value of plantations and slaves. In Florida, by 1860, land owned by individuals totaled three million acres, double the amount in 1850, and the value of land was placed at \$16,435,727, triple the value in 1850. Slaves had doubled in value

42. Manuscripts in possession of Mrs. Martha Bailey Brinson, Monticello, Florida.

43. Stamp, *The Peculiar Institution*, pp. 64, 65, 398.

44. Unpublished Census Returns, 1860.

by 1860, representing an investment of \$61,745,000.⁴⁵ Thus, had the system of slavery not been profitable, this rapid increase in values would not have been evidenced.

Another phenomenon indicating the profitability of using slave labor was the financial system developed by Florida planters to sustain their economy after the bank failures of the early 1840s. By 1845 no banks were operating, and until the State Bank at Tallahassee was organized in 1856 by William Bailey there was no bank in Florida. As a substitute for banking facilities, the planter group resorted to the method of borrowing from and lending to each other. Estate inventories reveal the importance of the arrangement. Planters charged interest rates from 6 to 10 per cent for money loaned, and this interest received could represent a substantial portion of a planter's yearly income.⁴⁶

In almost every instance, slaveowners mentioned in chapter 7 engaged in borrowing and lending. This system, well established after 1840, was a financial arrangement used to preserve the plantation economy. A list of promissory notes due John Bellamy, amounting to \$123,022, serves as an example. These notes were made from time to time between 1841 and 1847. Typical inventory entries made in 1847 by Smith Simkins, the administrator for Bellamy's estate, are: "Mary Shehee's note dated April 1, 1844 and payable one day after date with 8 pct. per annum interest from date, \$139.90; Tom Peter Chaires, Green Chaires and Joseph Chaires, note dated February 12, 1840 and payable January 1, 1841 with interest from date at 10 pct., \$4,200." The Chaires brothers made payments reducing their notes and owed a balance of only \$895 in 1847.⁴⁷

Abraham Bellamy, son of John Bellamy, left a rather large estate for his wife and children. Included among Bellamy's assets was money loaned at interest. Until his children reached maturity the income from the interest accruing on bonds and notes was used for their support, maintenance, and education. A statement showing

45. De Bow, *Compendium of the Seventh Census*, p. 169; *Agriculture of the United States in 1860*, p. 18. The estimate of value of slaves is based upon an average of \$1,000 per Negro. No figures are given showing total values of slaves in 1860. Actually, slaves of all descriptions, young and old alike, were selling for \$1,000 and more per head by 1860.

46. Probate Records, Gadsden, Jefferson, Leon, and Madison counties.

47. *Inventories, Appraisements and Accounts*, Book A, pp. 21-23, Jefferson County.

amounts received as interest for Theodosia, one of Bellamy's daughters, on money belonging to her and loaned out, is characteristic of the system of money lending that facilitated exchange. The bonds and notes belonging to Theodosia amounted to \$25,272 in 1855. Her income from this amount for the period December 22, 1856, to July 6, 1857, was \$2,588. Some of the notes with accruing interest were made by William Bailey, William J. Bailey, the firm of I. G. Pettus and Company, and Joseph F. Bythewood.⁴⁸

Listed among the assets on the inventory of Reddin W. Parramore's estate is \$30,000 representing money loaned at interest. Rates of interest varied from 8 to 10 per cent. Many of the notes were for small amounts, from \$100 to \$300, and a few for amounts as large as \$4,000 and \$5,000. Usually these notes listed among the assets of deceased planters' estates are classified as being "good," "poor," "doubtful," and "desperate." Parramore was more fortunate than certain other planters since most of his notes were marked "good."⁴⁹

John G. Anderson, a participant in this system of financing, had a Leon County estate valued at \$300,000 in 1856; of this amount, \$251,766 represented bonds owned by him and promissory notes due him with interest accruing at various rates. Some of the notes were made by Edward C. Cabell, Robert W. Williams, John Beard, George W. Parkhill, the Pensacola and Georgia Railroad Company, and the firm of Harris and Tucker. Promissory notes due Anderson ranged from \$100 to \$17,000.⁵⁰

This system of Florida planters' borrowing and lending money as a means of exchange and credit evolved out of necessity. Though the arrangement was of great significance economically, it was not the only system used to finance the plantation economy. Of comparable significance was the factorage system (cotton factor and commission merchant), where the planter was advanced cash on his crop and plantation supplies, credit being extended him far in advance of his cotton to be sold.

After 1840, Florida planters discovered more effective ways to make and use labor-saving farm implements and machinery. A new type of cotton gin, a steel tooth cylinder machine, was used on

48. *Record Book of Annual Returns*, pp. 70-72, 94-107, 192, 193, 240-55, Madison County.

49. Abraham Bellamy Estate, File 33-43, Jefferson County.

50. *Inventory and Appraisements*, Book C, pp. 140-44, Leon County. Anderson also owned property in Jefferson County.

a number of plantations. For ginning short staple cotton, the new machine was superior to the saw gin; it was also used to gin Sea Island cotton. It was used by William Bailey, John Branch, William F. Lloyd, John C. McGehee, Richard Harrison, Benjamin F. Whitner, Robert W. Williams, and some other Middle Florida planters.⁵¹ James Peeler, a Leon County Methodist minister, obtained patents for two valuable inventions, a plow and a manure distributor.⁵² Another Leon County resident manufactured cigars from tobacco grown on his plantation. These cigars were "sufficiently strong and had none of that flavor peculiar to homemade cigars which causes them to be disliked by old smokers."⁵³

As a result of constant selection of seed, Florida growers developed an improved cotton. They also developed a practical and inexpensive system of enriching the soil through crop rotation, using legumes to put back into the soil the nitrogen removed from it by cotton and corn. They ditched their fields for proper drainage and used contour plowing to check erosion. They produced on their plantations a large proportion of the food and supplies necessary for a self-sufficient operation. After 1855, the profits from their cotton brought them to the belief that their prosperity could only be protected by withdrawal from the Union.

The importance of religion to the planter class in Florida is evidenced by the great number of small churches located in the plantation belt; they served prior to 1860 as meeting places for community worship. Religion was also manifested by the manner in which many planters bequeathed legacies for religious purposes. Emmala Bellamy, widow of William Bellamy, directed in her will, dated 1851, that \$250 be paid from her estate annually to the trustees of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Monticello to be used for "completing and finishing the Church Building." She also directed that \$30 be paid annually toward support of the church minister, \$15 annually for use of the Missionary Society of the Florida Conference, and another \$15 annually to help widows and orphans of deceased ministers of the Florida Conference.⁵⁴

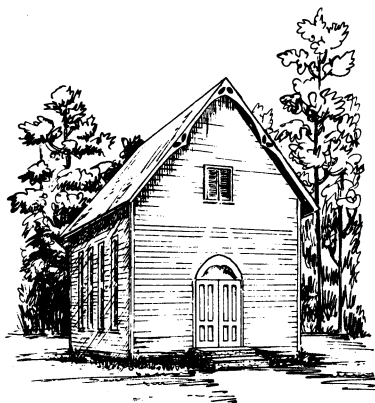
William J. Bailey, Jr., directed in his will, dated 1862, that "the Florida Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church" be given

51. Tallahassee *Florida Sentinel*, June 6, 1854.

52. Tallahassee *Floridian and Journal*, July 16, 1859.

53. *Ibid.*, January 21, 1860.

54. *Wills and Letters Testamentary*, Book B, pp. 34-36, Jefferson County.



Early Methodist Church near Mr.
Finlayson's present home,
Ashville, Florida



First school building, now restored as
public library, Quincy, Florida



Simmons home, Monticello, Florida



Lyndhurst Plantation

\$500 to be used for educating young men for the ministry. Bailey also directed that his executors "give annually not less than fifty dollars to a missionary of the M. E. Church to preach the gospel and catechize my negroes." Bailey, a religious man who believed "in the atoning blood of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ," committed his soul to God's care and "my life if necessary to the service of my country."⁵⁵

The Methodist Episcopal denomination had the largest membership in Florida, and the Missionary and Primitive Baptists had the second largest. Presbyterians and Protestant Episcopalians formed a smaller percentage of the total. The Roman Catholic denomination had only one church in Middle Florida, in Leon County. There were roughly 150 churches (all counties did not make returns) throughout the state by 1850, slightly more than half of them located in Middle Florida.⁵⁶

Many of the schools in Florida were organized and supported by the Methodist Episcopal Church. Fletcher Institute, East Florida Seminary, Madison Female Seminary, and Central Male College at Quincy were established and supported by the Methodists. Jefferson Academy at Monticello, though supported by public funds, was strengthened through the interests of the planter group, the majority of whom appear to have been Methodists.⁵⁷ Emmala Belamy left a legacy of \$150 to be used to help defray costs of the "new brick Jefferson Academy" being constructed in 1851.⁵⁸

By 1850, there were 35 common schools and 11 academies in Middle Florida with a total enrollment of 1,377 pupils.⁵⁹ Some of these academies are listed as seminaries, though there was little difference in their academic quality. By 1860, there were 52 common schools and 14 academies with a total enrollment of 2,760.⁶⁰ There

55. *Ibid.*, p. 160.

56. Unpublished Census Returns (Social Statistics), 1850; Joseph D. Cushman, "The Episcopal Church in Florida, 1821-1892."

57. Census Returns (Social Statistics), 1850.

58. *Wills and Letters Testamentary*, Book B, pp. 34-36, Jefferson County.

59. Unpublished Census Returns (Social Statistics), 1850; De Bow, *Compendium of the Seventh Census*, p. 207. There were 3,129 pupils enrolled throughout the state in 1850, 1,251 in private schools and 1,878 in publicly supported schools. When it is remembered that white populations were heavier outside of Middle Florida, allowance is made for more than half of the total enrollment being east and west of Middle Florida. The concentration of Negro slaves in Middle Florida made the section more heavily populated than others.

60. Unpublished Census Returns (Social Statistics), 1860.

was no state school system and common schools, whether public or private, usually consisted of one teacher (or tutor) and fifteen to forty pupils. The privately supported common school was, in most instances, an arrangement made by the planter whereby he employed someone to live in his home to instruct his children and neighboring children. The most elementary aspects of education, reading, writing, and arithmetic, were taught in the common schools. The academies and seminaries were day schools or boarding schools with all levels of secondary instruction.

The Quincy Male and Female Academy, whose management claimed it to be the oldest of its kind in Florida, was typical of the secondary schools, offering a variety of courses for boys and girls. Amanda A. Eno, assisted by her two sisters, Julia and Ada, was in charge of education for females and James M. Doby was in charge of male education. Courses offered to the females were designed to give them a thorough knowledge of "both the solid and ornamental branches" of education. The school principal, N. A. Stewart, claimed that courses of instruction for males were sufficiently extensive to prepare students to enter the junior class in college. In addition to classrooms, the Quincy Academy was equipped with a library, laboratory facilities for courses in physical science, and a music room.⁶¹

After 1850, there was a movement throughout the South for the sons of southerners to be educated in southern colleges to instill in the youthful mind the proper attitude toward slavery. The system of employing northern tutors in southern homes and of sending southerners to the North to be educated was denounced. Southern youth must, "from the infant school to the university, be made familiar with all those powerful arguments, scriptural and political, by which slavery—as a noble and necessary institution of God's creation—is supported, vindicated and defended."⁶²

There was a movement in Florida after 1850 to establish a state seminary "sufficiently respectable in character to educate the youth of the country and to supply the state with a sufficient number of educated young men to teach the common and higher schools in all the counties of the State."⁶³ Various groups suggested locations

61. Tallahassee *Florida Sentinel*, December 23, 1851.

62. *Ibid.*, July 11, 1854.

63. A report made by M. S. Lang, a member of the committee on schools and colleges, to the Senate, 1851, ms., Secretary of State's Office, Tallahassee.

for the seminary. Residents of Marion County thought Ocala in East Florida offered the best location. Those from Escambia County in West Florida insisted that the seminary be located at Pensacola.⁶⁴ Middle Florida residents, supported by the politically powerful planter group, argued that Tallahassee, being the state capital and centered between east and west, was the best place.⁶⁵

In 1857, after much controversy over the location of the new college, the Board of Education announced that "with the liberal appropriation made by the City of Tallahassee" the State Seminary was being organized on a permanent basis to be situated in Tallahassee.⁶⁶ The following year, the board announced that "females as well as males shall receive instruction and a suitable building will be provided for the Female Department."⁶⁷

The increase in numbers of schools, churches, and more pretentious plantation homes built between 1850 and 1860 reflected the increased prosperity of the cotton planters. By 1860, the "high-bred class of inhabitants" that Solon Robinson described in 1851 was experiencing prosperity hitherto unknown to them. Profits from cotton were never so great, and their investments in land and slaves had doubled in value. Slavery, which supported this flourishing economy, was a strange, unnatural condition, inconsistent with the ideals upon which the nation had been founded. Those who spoke in its defense were quite naturally motivated by economics, though they used numerous superfluous arguments to justify its protection. There is no need to repeat the proslavery arguments. It is sufficient to say that they were seriously accepted and sustained by a slaveholding society which stood to lose its "all" if slavery were abolished.

The rapid expansion of cotton production and slavery in Florida between 1830 and 1860 has been shown. This was a general trend that developed in other frontier areas, such as western Georgia,

64. A letter to the General Assembly from Lewis C. Gaines, Ocala, dated December 10, 1852; a petition to the General Assembly from the citizens of Pensacola (n.d.); a committee report recommending that the State Seminary be located at Quincy; miscellaneous correspondence pertaining to the establishment of the seminary, dated 1851-56, mss., Secretary of State's Office, Tallahassee.

65. Miscellaneous correspondence, *ibid.*

66. Tallahassee *Floridian and Journal*, October 3, 1857.

67. *Ibid.*, June 26, 1858.



Gregory House near Quincy, Florida



Smith House, Madison Florida



"...Two chivalric sons of a wealthy cotton planter on Lake Jackson near Tallahassee. . .
'Now, young masters, stop this weeping, go fight for your country like men, and mind—
don't disgrace me!'"

Though this was published in derision by the NEW YORK NEWS, the participants, and the
South, were content with rather than ashamed of its implications.

"Two Chivalric Sons"

Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, and Texas. Land speculation was closely related to cotton culture, since it was for the specific purpose of growing more cotton that more land was unquestionably thought to be necessary.

Settlers came to Florida from depleted cotton areas in older states to try their fortunes in this new planting country. They often brought their slaves along as capital. They purchased their land at intervals, in small parcels at first, paying one and two dollars an acre. As the economy improved during the 1830s, they had to pay ten and twelve dollars an acre. With this prosperity there was the need for increased acreage and a large slave force to work it. Capital accumulations of profitable years were turned back to cotton culture in the form of more land and more slaves. As a consequence, many planters bought the small holdings of their neighbors and prayed that their slaves would breed fast enough to increase the labor supply proportionately. Records show that the majority of the more well-established plantations in Florida came into being prior to 1850. It was rare for planters to buy complete estates from other planters. Instead, by constant expansion, they increased their own.

Profits in cotton depended on the cultivation of rich lands as well as the efficient management of both capital and labor. It is evident that a more effective system of plantation economy developed during the 1840s as a result of the depressed cotton market brought on by the panic of 1837. Also, a more determined effort toward agricultural reform was made, evidenced by planters taking advantage of the newer concepts of crop rotation, seed selection, and technological innovations. After 1850, a general prosperity prevailed, and there is no doubt that cotton growers in Florida made unusual profits on their crops.

Appendix A

SELECTIONS FROM THE FLORIDA SLAVE NARRATIVE COLLECTION

The Slave Narrative Collection, composed of some 2,000 interviews with former slaves in 17 states, was done by federal writers under auspices of the Works Progress Administration during the 1930s.¹ The interviews are invaluable since they tell of the life and labor of slaves from the slaves' view: how it felt to be a slave, the treatment they received, and their general activity on the plantation or in the city. More than this, the narratives record the attitudes of former slaves, their feelings of dejection and hopelessness or of resistance and rebellion while in bondage. Slaves were aware of their "wretchedness in consequence of ignorance" and expressed great joy when freedom came. They remembered the rise and fall of the Republican Party in the South and the meaninglessness of guarantees under the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments. In old age, they were contemporaries of Franklin Delano Roosevelt and many of them spoke of him and his "pension" plan with affection and respect.

The quality of the narratives varies, depending largely upon the talent of the interviewer. Since the collection is valuable as Negro folklore, all of the interviews should have been recorded verbatim in the Negro dialect. Since all are not, those reported in the words of the federal writer are less desirable. Another flaw is the great exaggeration in certain of the narratives; caution must be used when

1. *Slave Narratives, A Folk History of Slavery in the United States from Interviews with Former Slaves.*

evaluating these. Others are an excellent original source for knowledge of slave life. Norman R. Yetman, in *Life Under the Peculiar Institution, Selections from the Slave Narrative Collection* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1970), has edited selections from the collection but chose not to use a single Florida narrative.

In Florida, sixty-seven narratives were written from interviews. The fact that some of the interviews were made with Negroes who were slaves on plantations in older slave states and migrated to Florida after 1865 makes these less valuable for Florida history than the interviews with former slaves on Florida plantations. The following selections are narratives of former Florida slaves.

JOSOPHINE ANDERSON, AGE UNKNOWN

(Interviewed in 1937 at Tampa, Florida, by Jules A. Frost)

"Hants"

"I kaint tell nothin bout slavery times cept what I heared folks talk about. I was too young to remember much but I recleck seein my granma milk de cows an do de washin. Granpa was old, an dey let him do light work, mosly fish an hunt.

"I doan member nothin bout my daddy. He died when I was a baby. My stepfather was Stephen Anderson, an my mammy's name was Dorcas. He come fum Vajinny, but my mammy was borned an raised in Wilmington. My name was Josophine Anderson for I married Willie Jones. I had two half-brothers youngern me, John Henry an Ed, an a half-sister, Elsie. De boys had to mind de calves an sheeps, an Elsie nursed de missus' baby. I done de cookin, mosly, an helped my mammy spin.

"I was only five years old when dey brung me to Sanderson, in Baker County, Florida. My stepfather went to work for a turpentine man, makin barrels, an he work at dat job till he drop dead in de camp. I reckon he musta had heart disease.

"I doan recleck ever seein my mammy wear shoes. Even in de winter she go barefoot, an I reckon cold didn't hurt her feet no moren her hands an face. We all wore dresses made o' homespun. De thread was spun an de cloth wove right in our own home. My mammy an granmammy an me done it in spare time.

"My weddin dress was blue—blue for true. I thought it was de

prettiest dress I ever see. We was married in de court-house, an dat be a mighty happy day for me. Mos folks dem days got married by laying a broom on de floor an jumpin over it. Dat seals de marriage, an at de same time brings em good luck.

"Ya see brooms keeps hants away. When mean folks dies, de old debbil sometimes doan want em down dere in de bad place, so he makes witches out of em, and sends em back. One thing bout witches, dey gotta count everthing fore dey can git acrosst it. You put a broom acrosst your door at night an old witches gotta count ever straw in dat broom fore she can come in.

"Some folks can jes nachly see hants bettern others. Teeny, my gal can. I reckon das cause she been borned wid a veil—you know, a caul, sumpum what be over some babies' faces when dey is borned. Folks borned wid a caul can see sperrits, an tell whas gonna happen fore it comes true.

"Use to worry Teeny right smart, seein sperrits day an night. My husban say he gonna cure her, so he taken a grain o' corn an put it in a bottle in Teeny's bedroom over night. Den he planted it in de yard, an driv plenty sticks roun de place. When it was growin good, he put leaf-mold roun de stalk, an watch it ever day, an tell us don't *nobody* touch de stalk. It raise three big ears o' corn, an when dey was good roastin size he pick em off an cook em an tell Teeny eat ever grain offn all three cobs. He watch her while she done it, an she ain never been worried wid hants no more. She sees em jes the same, but dey doan bother her none.

"Fust time I ever knowed a hant to come into our quarters was when I was jes big nough to go out to parties. De game what we use to play was spin de plate. Ever time I think on dat game it gives me de shivers. One time there was a strange young man come to a party where I was. Said he name Richard Green, an he been takin keer o' horses for a rich man what was gonna buy a plantation in dat county. He look kinda slick an dressed-up—diffunt from de rest. All de gals begin to cast sheep's eyes at him, an hope he gonna choose dem when dey start playin games.

"Pretty soon dey begin to play spin de plate an it come my turn fust thing. I spin it an call out 'Mister Green!' He jumps to de middle o' de ring to grab de plate an 'Bang'—bout four guns go off all at oncet, an Mister Green fall to de floor plum dead shot through de head.

"Fore we knowed who done it, de sheriff an some more men

jump down from de loft, where dey been hidin an tell us quit hollerin an doan be scairt. Dis man be a bad desper—you know, one o' them outlaws what kills folks. He some kinda foreigner, an jes tryin make blieve he a niggah, so's they don't find him.

"Well we didn't feel like playin no more games, an f'ever after dat you couldn't git no niggas to pass dat house alone atter dark. Dey say de place was hanted, an if you look through de winder any dark night you could see a man in dere spinnin de plate.

"I sho didn't never look in, cause I done seen more hants aready dan I ever wants to see agin. One night I was goin to my granny's house. It was jes comin dark, an when I got to de crick an start across on de foot-log, dere on de other end o' dat log was a man wid his haid cut off an layin plum over on his shoulder. He look at me, kinda pitiful, an don't say a word—but I closely never waited to see what he gonna talk about. I pure flew back home. I was so scairt I couldn't tell de folks what done happened till I set down an got my breath.

"Nother time, not so long ago, when I live down in Gary, I be walkin down de railroad track soon in de mornin an fore I knowed it, dere was a white man walkin long side o' me. I jes thought it were somebody, but I wadn't sho, so I turn off at de fust street to git way from dere. De nex mawnin I be goin to work at de same time. It were kinda foggy an dark, so I never seen nobody till I mighty nigh run into dis same man, an dere he goes, bout half a step ahead o' me, his two hands restin on his be-hind.

"I was so close up to him I could see him plain as I see you. He had fingernails dat long, all cleaned an polished. He was tall, an had on a derby hat, an stylish black clothes. When I walk slow he slow down, an when I stop, he stop, never oncet looking roun. My feets make a noise on de cinders tween de rails, but he doan make a mite o' noise. Dat was de fust thing got me scairt, but I figger I better find out for sho ifen he be a sperrit; so I say, good an loud: 'Lookee here, Mister, I jes an old colored woman, an I knows my place, an I wisht you wouldn't walk wid me counta what folks might say.'

"He never looked roun no moren if I wasn't there, an I cut my eyes roun to see if there is somebody I can holler to for help. When I looked back he was gone; gone, like dat, without makin a sound. Den I knowed he be a hant, an de nex day when I tell somebody bout it dey say he be de gemmen what got killed at de crossin a

spell back, an other folks has seen him jus like I did. Dey say dey can hear babies cryin at de trestle right near dere, an ain't nobody yit ever found em.

"Dat ain de ony hant I ever seen. One day I go out to de smoke-house to git a mess o' taters. It was after sundown, but still purty light. When I gits dere de door be unlocked an a big man standin half inside. 'What you doin stealin our taters?' I hollers at him, an pow! He gone, jes like dat. Did I git back to dat house? We mighty glad to eat grits an cornbread dat night.

"When we livin at Titusville, I see my old mammy comin up de road jus as plain as day. I stan on de porch, fixin to run an meet her, when all of a sudden she be gone. I begin to cry an tell de folks I ain't gonna see my mammy again. An sho nuff, I never did. She die at Sanderson, back in West Florida, fore I got to see her.

"Does I blieve in witches? S-a-a-y, I knows more bout em dan to jes 'blieve'—I been *rid* by em. Right here in dis house. You ain never been rid by a witch! Well, you mighty lucky. Dey come in de night, ginnerly soon after you drop off to sleep. Dey put a bridle on your head, an a bit in your mouth, an a saddle on your back. Den dey take off their skin an hang it up on de wall. Den dey git on you an some nights dey like to ride you to death. You try to holler but you kaint, counta the iron bit in your mouth, an you feel like somebody holdin you down. Den dey ride you back home an into your bed. When you hit de bed you jump an grab de kivers, an de witch be gone, like dat. But you know you been rid mighty hard, cause you all wet wid sweat, an you feel plum tired out.

"Some folks say you jus been dreamin, counta de blood stop circulatin in your back. Shucks! Dey ain never been rid by a witch, or dey ain sayin dat.

"Old witch docter, he want ten dollars for a piece o' string, what he say some kinda charm words over. Tells me to make a image o' dat old witch outa dough, an tie dat string roun its neck; den when I bake it in de oven, it swell up an de magic string shet off her breath. I didn't have no ten doller, so he say ifen I git up five doller he make me a hand—you know, what collored folks cals a jack. Dat be a charm what will keep de witches away. I knows how to make em, but day doan do no good thout de magic words, an I doan know dem. You take a little pinch o' dried snake skin an some graveyard dirt, an some red pepper an a lock o' your hair wrapped roun some black rooster feathers. Den you spit whiskey

on em an wrop em in red flannel an sew it into a ball bout dat big. Den you hang it under your right armpit, an ever week you give it a drink o' whiskey, to keep it strong an powful.

"Dat keep de witches fum ridin you; but nary one o' dese charms work wid dis old witch. I got a purty good idee who she is, an she got a charm powfuller dan both of dem. But she kaint git across de flax-seed, not till she count ever seed. You doan blieve dat? Huh! I reckon I knows—I done tried it out. I gits me a lil bag o' pure fresh flaxseed, an I sprinkle it all roun de bed; den I put some on top of de mattress, an under de sheet. Den I goes to bed an sleeps like a baby, an dat old witch doan bother me no more.

"Ony oncet. Soon's I wake up, I light me a lamp an look on de floor an dere, side o' my bed was my dress, layin right over dat flaxseed, so's she could walk over on de dress, big as life. I snatch up de dress an throw it on de bed; den I go to sleep, an I ain *never* been bothered no more.

"Some folks reads de Bible backwards to keep witches fum ridin em, but dat doan do me no good, cause I kaint read. But flaxseed work so good I doan be studyin night-riding witches no more."

MARY MINUS BIDDLE, AGE WHEN INTERVIEWED: 105
(Date and place of interview and interviewer unknown)

"Slaves Customs and Anecdotes"

Mary Minus Biddle, age one hundred five was born in Pensacola, Florida, 1833, and raised in Columbia County. She is married, and has several children. For her age she is exceptionally active, being able to wash and do her house work. With optimism she looks forward to many more years of life. Her health is excellent. Having spent thirty-two years of her life as a slave she relates vividly some of her experiences.

Her master Lancaster Jamison was a very kind man and never mistreated his slaves. He was a man of mediocre means, and instead of having a large plantation as was usual in those days, he ran a boarding house, the revenue therefrom furnishing him substance for a livelihood. He had a small farm from which fresh produce was obtained to supply the needs of his lodgers. Mary's family were his only slaves. The family consisted of her mother, father, brother and a sister. The children called the old master "Fa" and

their father "Pappy." The master never resented this appellation, and took it in good humor. Many travelers stopped at his boarding house; Mary's mother did the cooking, her father "tended" the farm, and Mary, her brother and sister, did chores about the place. There was a large one-room house built in the yard in which the family lived. Her father had a separate garden in which he raised his own produce, also a smokehouse where the family meats were kept. Meats were smoked in order to preserve them.

During the day Mary's father was kept so busy attending his master's farm that there was no time for him to attend to a little farm that he was allowed to have. He overcame this handicap, however, by setting up huge scaffolds in the field which he burned and from the flames that this fire emitted he could see well enough to do what was necessary to his farm.

The master's first wife was a very kind woman; at her death Mary's master moved from Pensacola to Columbia County.

Mary was very active with the plow, she could handle it with the agility of a man. This prowess gained her the title of "plow girl."

COOKING.

Stoves were unknown and cooking was done in a fireplace that was built of clay, a large iron rod was built in across the opening of the fireplace on which were hung pots that had special handles that fitted about the rod holding them in place over the blazing fire as the food cooking was done in a moveable oven which was placed in the fireplace over hot coals of corn cobs. Potatoes were roasted in ashes. Oft' times Mary's father would sit in front of the fireplace until a late hour in the night and on arising in the morning the children would find in a corner a number of roasted potatoes which their father had thoughtfully roasted and which the children readily consumed.

LIGHTING SYSTEM.

Matches were unknown; a flint rock and a file provided the fire. This occurred by striking a file against a flint rock which threw off sparks that fell into a wad of dry cotton used for the purpose. This cotton, as a rule, readily caught fire. This was fire and all the fire needed to start any blaze.

WEAVING.

The white folks wove the cloth on regular looms which were made into dresses for the slaves. For various colors of cloth the

thread was dyed. The dye was made by digging up red shank and wild indigo roots which were boiled; the substance obtained being some of the best dye to be found.

BEVERAGES & FOOD.

Bread was made from flour and wheat. The meat used was pork, beef, mutton and goat. For preservation it was smoked and kept in the smokehouse. Coffee was used as a beverage and when this ran out as oft' times happened, parched peanuts were used for the purpose.

Mary and family arose before daybreak and prepared breakfast for the master and his family, after which they ate in the same dining room. When this was over the dishes were washed by Mary, her brother and sister. The children then played about until meals were served again.

WASHING AND SOAP.

Washing was done in homemade wooden tubs, and boiling in iron pots similar to those of today. Soap was made from fat and lye.

AMUSEMENTS.

The only amusement to be had was a big candy pulling, or hog killing and chicken cooking. The slaves from the surrounding plantations were allowed to come together on these occasions. A big time was had.

CHURCH.

The slaves went to the "white folks" church on Sundays. They were seated in the rear of the church. The white minister would arise and exhort the slaves to "mind your masters, you owe them your respect." An old Christian slave who perceived things differently could sometimes be heard to mumble, "Yeah, wese jest as good as deys is only deys white and we's black, huh." She dare not let the whites hear this. At times meetin's were held in a slave cabin where some "inspired" slave led the services.

In the course of years Mr. Jamison married again. His second wife was a veritable terror. She was always ready and anxious to whip a slave for the least misdemeanor. The master told Mary and her mother that before he would take the chance of them running away on account of her meanness he would leave her. As soon as he would leave the house this was a signal for his wife to start on a slave. One day, with a kettle of hot water in her hand, she chased Mary, who ran to another plantation and hid there until the good

master returned. She then poured out her troubles to him. He was very indignant and remonstrated with his wife for being so cruel. She met her fate in later years; her son-in-law becoming angry at some of her doings in regard to him shot her, which resulted in her death. Instead of mourning, everybody seemed to rejoice, for the menace to well being had been removed. Twice a year Mary's father and master went to Cedar Keys, Florida to get salt. Ocean water was obtained and boiled, salt resulting. They always returned with about three barrels of salt.

The greatest event in the life of a slave was about to occur, and the most sorrowful in the life of a master, FREEDOM was at hand. A Negro was seen coming in the distance, mounted upon a mule, approaching Mr. Jamison who stood upon the porch. He told him of the liberation of the slaves. Mr. Jamison had never before been heard to curse, but this was one day that he let go a torrent of words that are unworthy to appear in print. He then broke down and cried like a slave who was being lashed by his cruel master. He called Mary's mother and father, Phyliss and Sandy, "I ain't got no more to do with you, you are free," he said, "if you want to stay with me you may and I'll give you one-third of what you raise." They decided to stay. When the crop was harvested the master did not do as he had promised. He gave them nothing. Mary slipped away, mounted the old mule "Mustang" and galloped away at a mules snail speed to Newnansville where she related what had happened to a Union captain. He gave her a letter to give to Mr. Jamison. In it he reminded him that if he didn't give Mary's family what he had promised he would be put in jail. Without hesitation the old master complied with these pungent orders.

After this incident Mary and her family left the good old boss to seek a new abode in other parts. This was the first time that the master had in any way displayed any kind of unfairness toward them, perhaps it was the reaction to having to liberate them.

MARRIAGE.

There was no marriage during slavery according to civil or religious custom among the slaves. If a slave saw a woman whom he desired he told his master. If the woman in question belonged on another plantation, the master would consult her master: "One of my boys wants to marry one of your gals," he would say. As a rule it was agreeable that they should live together as man and wife. This was encouraged for it increased the slave population by

newborns, hence, being an asset to the masters. The two slaves thus joined were allowed to see one another at intervals upon special permission from the master. He must have a pass to leave the plantation. Any slave caught without one while off the plantation was subject to be caught by the "pade-rollers" (a low class of white who roved the country to molest a slave at the least opportunity. Some of them were hired by the masters to guard against slaves running away or to apprehend them in the event that they did) who would beat them unmercifully, and send them back to the plantation from whence they came.

As a result of this form of matrimony at emancipation there were no slaves lawfully married. Orders were given that if they preferred to live together as man and wife they must marry according to law. They were given nine months to decide this question, after which if they continued to live together they were arrested for adultery. A Mr. Fyer, Justice of the Peace at Gainesville, was assigned to deal with the situation around the plantation where Mary and her family lived. A big supper was given, it was early, about twenty-five slave couples attended. There was gaiety and laughter. A barrel of lemonade was served. A big time was had by all, then those couples who desired to remain together were joined in wedlock according to civil custom. The party broke up in the early hours of the morning.

Mary Biddle, cognizant of the progress that science and invention has made in the intervening years from Emancipation and the present time, could not help but remark of the vast improvement of the lighting system of today and that of slavery. There were no lamps or kerosene. The first thread that she ever spun was for a wick to be used in a candle, the only means of light. Beef tallow was used to make the candle; this was placed in a candle mould while hot. The wick was then placed in the center of the tallow as it rested in the mould; this was allowed to cool. When this chemical process occurred there was a regular sized candle to be used for lighting.

Mary now past the century mark, her lean bronze body resting in a rocker, her head wrapped in a white 'kerchief, and puffing slowly on her clay pipe, expressed herself in regard to presidents: "Roosevelt has don' mo' than any other president, why you know ever since freedom they been talkin' 'bout dis pension, talkin' 'bout it tha's all, but you see Mr. Roosevelt he doin' com' an' gived it tu us.

What? I'll say he's a good rightus man, an' um sho' go' vot' fo' him."

Residing in her little cabin in Eatonville, Florida, she is able to smile because she has some means of security, the Old Age Pension.

PATIENCE CAMPBELL, AGE WHEN INTERVIEWED: 103

(Interviewed in 1936 by James Johnson at Monticello, Florida)

Patience Campbell, blind for 26 years, was born in Jackson County, near Marianna, Florida about 1853, on a farm of George Bullock. Her mother Tempy, belonged to Bullock, while her father Arnold Merritt, belonged to Edward Merritt, a large plantation owner. According to Patience, her mother's owner was very kind, her father's very cruel. Bullock had very few slaves, but Merritt had a great many of them, not a few of whom he sold at the slave markets.

Patience spent most of her time playing in the sand when she was a child, while her parents toiled in the fields for their respective owners. Her grandparents on her mother's side belonged to Bullock, but of her father's people she knew nothing as "they didn't come to this country." When asked where they lived, she replied "in South Carolina."

Since she lived with her mother, Patience fared much better than had she lived with her father. Her main foods included meats, greens, rice, corn bread which was replaced by biscuits on Sunday morning. Coffee was made from parched corn or meal and was the chief drink. The food was cooked in large iron pots and pans in an open fireplace and seasoned with salt obtained by evaporating sea water.

Water for all purposes was drawn from a well. In order to get soap to wash with, the cook would save all the grease left from the cooking. Lye was obtained by mixing oak ashes with water and allowing them to decay. Tubs were made from large barrels.

When she was about seven or eight, Patience assisted other children about her age and older in picking out cotton seeds from the picked cotton. After the cotton was weighed on improved scales, it was bound in bags made of hemp.

Spinning and weaving were taught Patience when she was about ten. Although the cloth and thread were dyed various colors, she

knows only how blue was obtained by allowing the indigo plant to rot in water and straining the result.

Patience's father was not only a capable field worker but also a finished shoemaker. After tanning and curing his hides by placing them in water with oak bark for several days and then exposing them to the sun to dry, he would cut out the uppers and the soles after measuring the foot to be shod. There would be an inside sole as well as an outside sole tacked together by means of small tacks made of maple wood. Sewing was done on the shoes by means of flax thread.

Patience remembers saving the feathers from all the fowl to make feather beds. She doesn't remember when women stopped wearing hoops in their skirts nor when bed springs replaced bed ropes. She does remember, however, that these things were used. She saw her first windmill about 36 years ago, ten years before she went blind. She remembers seeing buggies during slavery time, little light carriages, some with two wheels and some with four. She never heard of any money called "shin-plasters," and she became money conscious during the war when Confederate currency was introduced. When the slaves were sick, they were given castor oil, turpentine and medicines made from various roots and herbs.

Patience's master joined the confederacy, but her father's master did not. Although Negroes could enlist in the southern army if they desired, none of them wished to do so but preferred to join northern forces and fight for the thing they desired most, freedom. When freedom was no longer a dream, but a reality, the Merritts started life on their own as farmers. Twelve-year old Patience entered one of the schools established by the Freedmen's Bureau. She recalls the gradual growth of Negro settlements, the churches and the rise and fall of the Negroes politically.

FLORIDA CLAYTON, AGE WHEN INTERVIEWED: 82

(Interviewed in 1936 by Rachel A. Austin at Jacksonville, Florida)

The life of Florida Clayton is interesting in that it illustrates the miscegenation prevalent during the days of slavery. Interesting also is the fact that Florida was not a slave even though she was a product of those turbulent days. Many years before her birth—March 1, 1854—Florida's great grandfather, a white man, came to

Tallahassee, Florida from Washington, District of Columbia, with his children whom he had by his Negro slave. On coming to Florida, he set all of his children free except one boy, Amos, who was sold to a Major Ward. For what reason this was done, no one knew. Florida, named for the state in which she was born, was one of seven children born to Charlotte Norris (colored) whose father was a white man, and David Clayton (white).

Florida, in a retrogressive mood, can recall the "nigger hunters" and "nigger stealers" of her childhood days. Mr. Nimrod and Mr. Shehee, both white, specialized in catching runaway slaves with their trained bloodhounds. Her parents always warned her and her brothers and sisters to go in someone's yard whenever they saw these men with their dogs lest the ferocious animals tear them to pieces. In regards to the "nigger stealers," Florida tells of a covered wagon which used to come to Tallahassee at regular intervals and camp in some secluded spot. The children, attracted by the old wagon, would be eager to go near it, but they were always told that "Dry Head and Bloody Bones," a ghost who didn't like children, was in that wagon. It was not until later years that Florida and the other children learned that the driver of the wagon was a "nigger stealer" who stole children and took them to Georgia to sell at the slave markets.

When she was 11 years old, Florida saw the surrender of Tallahassee to the Yankees. Three years later she came to Jacksonville to live with her sister. She married but is now divorced after 12 years of marriage. Three years ago she entered the Old Folks Home at 1627 Franklin Street to live.

DOUGLAS DORSEY, AGE WHEN INTERVIEWED: 86

(Interviewed in 1937 by James Johnson at Jacksonville, Florida)

In South Jacksonville, on the Spring Glen Road lives Douglas Dorsey, an ex-slave, born in Suwannee County, Florida in 1851, fourteen years prior to freedom. His parents, Charlie and Anna Dorsey, were natives of Maryland and free people. In those days, Dorsey relates there were people known as "Nigger Traders" who used any subterfuge to catch Negroes and sell them into slavery. There was one Jeff Davis who was known as a professional "Nigger Trader," his slave boat docked in the slip at Maryland and Jeff

Davis and his henchmen went out looking for their victims. Unfortunately, his mother, Anna, and his father were caught one night and were bound and gagged and taken to Jeff Davis' boat which was waiting in the harbor, and there they were put into stocks. The boat stayed in port until it was loaded with Negroes, then sailed for Florida where Davis disposed of his human cargo.

Douglas Dorsey's parents were sold to Colonel Louis Matair, who had a large plantation that was cultivated by 85 slaves. Colonel Matair's house was of the pretentious southern colonial type which was quite prevalent during that period. The colonel had won his title because of his participation in the Indian War in Florida. He was the typical wealthy southern gentleman, and was very kind to his slaves. His wife, however, was just the opposite. She was exceedingly mean and could easily be termed a tyrant. There were several children in the Matair family and their home and plantation were located in Suwannee County, Florida.

Douglas' parents were assigned to their tasks, his mother was house-maid and his father was the mechanic, having learned this trade in Maryland as a free man. Charlie and Anna had several children and Douglas was among them. When he became large enough he was kept in the Matair home to build fires, assist in serving meals and other chores.

Mrs. Matair being a very cruel woman, would whip the slaves herself for any misdemeanor. Dorsey recalls an incident that is hard to obliterate from his mind, it is as follows: Dorsey's mother was called by Mrs. Matair, not hearing her, she continued with her duties, suddenly Mrs. Matair burst out in a frenzy of anger over the woman not answering. Anna explained that she did not hear her call, thereupon Mrs. Matair seized a large butcher knife and struck at Anna. Attempting to ward off the blow, Anna received a long gash on the arm that laid her up for some time. Young Douglas was a witness to this brutal treatment of his mother and he at that moment made up his mind to kill his mistress. He intended to put strychnine that was used to kill rats into her coffee that he usually served her. Fortunately freedom came and saved him of this act which would have resulted in his death.

He relates another incident in regard to his mistress as follows: To his mother and father was born a little baby boy, whose complexion was rather light. Mrs. Matair at once began accusing Colonel Matair as being the father of the child. Naturally the colonel denied,

but Mrs. Matair kept harassing him about it until he finally agreed to his wife's desire and sold the child. It was taken from its mother's breast at the age of eight months and auctioned off on the first day of January to the highest bidder. The child was bought by a Captain Ross and taken across the Suwannee River into Hamilton County. Twenty years later he was located by his family. He was a grown man, married and farming.

Young Douglas had the task each morning of carrying the Matair children's books to school. Willie, a boy of eight would teach Douglas what he learned in school, finally Douglas learned the alphabet and numbers. In some way Mrs. Matair learned that Douglas was learning to read and write. One morning after breakfast she called her son Willie to the dining room where she was seated and then sent for Douglas to come there too. She then took a quill pen, the kind used at that time, and began writing the alphabet and numerals as far as ten. Holding the paper up to Douglas, she asked him if he knew what they were; he proudly answered in the affirmative, not suspecting anything. She then asked him to name the letters and numerals, which he did. She then asked him to write them, which he did. When he reached the number ten, very proud of his learning, she struck him a heavy blow across the face, saying to him "If I ever catch you making another figure anywhere I'll cut off your right arm." Naturally Douglas and also her son Willie were much surprised as each thought what had been done was quite an achievement. She then called Mariah, the cook, to bring a rope, and tying the two of them to the old colonial post on the front porch, she took a chair and sat between the two, whipping them on their naked backs for such a time that for two weeks their clothes stuck to their backs on the lacerated flesh. To ease the soreness, Willie would steal grease from the house and together they would slip into the barn and grease each other's backs.

As to plantation life, Dorsey said that the slaves lived in quarters especially built for them on the plantation. They would leave for the fields at "sun up" and remain until "sundown," stopping only for a meal which they took along with them. Instead of having an overseer they had what was called a "driver" by the name of January. His duties were to get the slaves together in the morning and see that they went to the fields and assign them to their tasks. He worked as the other slaves, though, he had more privileges. He would stop work at any time he pleased and go around to inspect

the work of the others, and thus rest himself. Most of the orders from the master were issued to him. The crops consisted of cotton, corn, cane and peas, which were raised in abundance.

When the slaves left the fields, they returned to their cabins and after preparing and eating of their evening meal they gathered around a cabin to sing and moan songs seasoned with African melody. Then to the tune of an old fiddle they danced a dance called the "Green Corn Dance" and "Cut the Pigeon Wing." Sometimes the young men on the plantation would slip away to visit a girl on another plantation. If they were caught by the "Patrols" while on these visits they would be lashed on the bare backs as a penalty for this offense. A whipping post was used for this purpose. As soon as one slave was whipped, he was given the whip to whip his brother slave. Very often the lashes would bring blood very soon from the already lacerated skin, but this did not stop the lashing until one had received their due number of lashes.

Occasionally the slaves were ordered to church to hear a white minister. They were seated in the front pews of the master's church, while the whites sat in the rear. The minister admonished them to honor their masters and mistresses, and to have no other God but them, as "we cannot see the other God, but you can see your master and mistress." After the services the driver's wife who could read and write a little would tell them that what the minister said "was all lies."

Douglas says that he will never forget when he was a lad 14 years of age, when one evening he was told to go and tell the driver to have all the slaves come up to the house; soon the entire host of about 85 slaves were gathered there all sitting around on stumps, some standing. The colonel's son was visibly moved as he told them they were free, saying they could go anywhere they wanted to for he had no more to do with them, or that they could remain with him and have half of what was raised on the plantation. The slaves were happy at this news, as they had hardly been aware that there had been a war going on. None of them accepted the offer of the colonel to remain, as they were only too glad to leave the cruelties of the Matair plantation.

Dorsey's father got a job with Judge Carraway of Suwannee where he worked for one year. He later homesteaded 40 acres of land that he received from the government and began farming. Dorsey's father died in Suwannee County, Florida when Douglas

was a young man and then he and his mother moved to Arlington, Florida. His mother died several years ago at a ripe old age. Douglas Dorsey, aged but with a clear mind, lives with his daughter in Spring Glen.

BOLDEN HALL, AGE WHEN INTERVIEWED: 83

(Interviewed in 1936 by Alfred Farrell at Live Oak, Florida)

Bolden Hall was born in WauKeenah, Florida, a little town in Jefferson County, on February 12, 1853, the son of Alfred and Tina Hall. The Halls, who were the slaves of Thomas Lenton, owner of seventy-five or a hundred slaves, were the parents of twenty-one children. The Halls, who were born before emancipation, worked on the large plantation of Lenton which was devoted primarily to the growing of cotton and corn and secondarily to the growing of tobacco and pumpkins. Lenton was very good to his slaves and never whipped them unless it was absolutely necessary—which was seldom! He provided them with enough food and clothing, and always saw to it that their cabins were livable. He was careful, however, to see that they received no educational training, but did not interfere with their religious quest. The slaves were permitted to attend church with their masters to hear the white preacher, and occasionally the masters—supposedly un-beknown to the slaves—would have an itinerant colored minister preach to the slaves, instructing them to obey their master and mistress at all times. Although freedom came to the slaves in January, Master Lenton kept them until May in order to help him with his crops. When actual freedom was granted to the slaves, only a few of the young ones left the Lenton plantation. In 1882 Bolden Hall came to Live Oak where he has resided ever since. He married, but his wife is now dead, and to that union one child was born.

CHARLOTTE MARTIN, AGE WHEN INTERVIEWED: 82

(Interviewed in 1936 by Alfred Farrell at Live Oak, Florida)

Charlotte Mitchell Martin, one of twenty children born to Shepherd and Lucinda Mitchell, eighty-two years ago, was a slave of Judge Wilkerson on a large plantation in Sixteen, Florida,

a little town near Madison. Shepherd Mitchell was a wagoner who hauled whiskey from Newport News, Virginia for his owner. Wilkerson was very cruel and held them in constant fear of him. He would not permit them to hold religious meetings or any other kinds of meetings, but they frequently met in secret to conduct religious services. When they were caught, the "instigators"—known or suspected—were severely flogged. Charlotte recalls how her oldest brother was whipped to death for taking part in one of the religious ceremonies. This cruel act halted the secret religious services.

Wilkerson found it very profitable to raise and sell slaves. He selected the strongest and best male and female slaves and mated them exclusively for breeding. The huskiest babies were given the best of attention in order that they might grow into sturdy youths, for it was those who brought the highest prices at the slave markets. Sometimes the master himself had sexual relations with his female slaves, for the products of miscegenation were very remunerative. These offsprings were in demand as house servants.

After slavery the Mitchells began to separate. A few of the children remained with their parents and eked out their living from the soil. During this period Charlotte began to attract attention with her herb cures. Doctors sought her out when they were stumped by difficult cases. She came to Live Oak to care for an old colored woman and upon whose death she was given the woman's house and property. For many years she has resided in the old shack, farming, making quilts, and practicing her herb doctoring. She has outlived her husband for whom she bore two children. Her daughter is feeble-minded—her herb remedies can't cure her!

Appendix B

EXCERPTS FROM COUNTY TAX BOOKS IN FLORIDA SHOWING OWNERSHIP IN ACREAGE AND SLAVES

The following listings of persons owning acreage and slaves are taken from county tax books (on microfilm) at the State Library in Tallahassee, Florida. The year 1860 has been chosen (when books were available), since this period in time represents a maturity in economic growth based upon ownership in land and slaves. Listings for that year can be compared with unpublished census returns for 1860 to verify and reinforce findings. Frequent discrepancies occur when property values of individual ownership listed on tax rolls are compared with those listed on unpublished census rolls. Several conditions contribute to these discrepancies: carelessness or inefficiency of officials making returns, hesitancy of owners to declare true holdings, and loss of information resulting from the deteriorated condition of some tax books.

The following listings represent holdings of the average planter, a class of slaveholders largely neglected by historians. Only a few Florida planters can be called large-scale slaveholders, owners of hundreds of slaves. The majority owned a working force of thirty or more and usually, when the number owned was seventy or more, another plantation was under operation in the same county or in another county. When the owner was listed twice on the same roll, indicating ownership of two plantations, total holdings have been shown to avoid two listings. Only the more important counties have been selected.

Excerpts from Alachua County Tax Book, dated 1860, listing persons who owned thirty or more slaves and sizable amounts of acreage:

NAME	ACRES	SLAVES
E. E. Adamson	3,300	83
Major J. B. Baily	1,700	34
G. W. Bostow	480	35
E. C. Brevard	640	59
William L. Campbell	1,020	58
T. W. Chestnut	818	59
General J. G. Cooper	600	60
William C. Cunningham	1,200	61
Philip Dell	3,500	50
P. B. H. Dudley	960	30
Elias Earle	2,000	50
Thomas Fraser	800	39
Jett Geiger	740	42
C. E. Haile	3,000	156
Edward Haile	2,200	97
John Haile	960	63
T. E. Haile	1,500	79
Dr. James Hamson	1,666	30
James W. Hamson	1,175	50
Daniel R. June	1,600	45
Reverend E. L. King	3,500	32
Edward Lewis	1,280	50
John Lewis	540	35
W. W. Lewis	3,360	48
Colonel George Leitner	3,300	71
Stephen McCall	480	46
Colonel L. I. Patterson	1,200	43
Governor Madison S. Perry	3,000	35
Samuel R. Pyles	2,400	58
Cornelius Raine	800	63
J. M. Richardson	328	30
Daniel Scott	2,960	61
J. A. Scott	1,000	53
P. G. Snowdon	1,280	45
John B. Standley	15,115	124

NAME	ACRES	SLAVES
J. L. Thomas	1,272	30
John Whitaker	3,840	118
D. R. Williams	1,000	152
James L. Young	3,000	156

Excerpts from Gadsden County Tax Book, dated 1860, listing persons who owned thirty or more slaves and sizable amounts of acreage:

NAME	ACRES	SLAVES
Austin Estate	240	60
Daniel Bradwell	1,800	71
H. H. Brown	840	40
J. J. Colson	1,000	38
Henry P. Davis	2,600	59
Charles H. Dupont	5,800	108
Ralph Durr	1,400	46
Forbes Estate	4,000	75
Mose Forman	2,800	56
Henry Gee Estate	3,000	65
W. H. Gibson	3,000	77
Louis B. Gregory	1,600	33
W. S. Gregory	1,900	67
Edward Harley	1,360	30
H. R. Harris and Wife	2,550	132
Mrs. Elizabeth Harrison	2,000	47
Daniel Hinson	2,000	34
Miles W. Johnson	1,025	35
Daniel Kenan	75	30
William Kilcrease Estate	4,120	160
Mrs. S. A. Lines	3,476	106
H. M. Lisford	4,000	51
L. G. McElvy	1,000	30
John McMillan	2,340	50
Thomas Monroe	530	30
William Monroe	4,685	122
J. W. Oliver	500	37
K. W. Shine	4,500	72
John H. Smith	2,500	109
George Walker	5,000	47

SLAVERY IN ANTEBELLUM FLORIDA

NAME	ACRES	SLAVES
David White	1,003	30
Mrs. C. Woodburn	550	30
A. D. Zeigler	1,800	47

Excerpts from Hamilton County Tax Book, dated 1860, listing persons who owned thirty or more slaves and sizable amounts of acreage:

NAME	ACRES	SLAVES
Frink Estate	1,200	37
Adam S. Goodbread	2,610	48
N. P. Marion (M.D.)	1,880	49
Crawford Parrish	760	32
Sara B. Roberts, Agent	520	30
F. J. Ross	2,360	56
John R. Staples	1,960	67
Joseph Thomas	800	44
Robert Thomas	700	44

Excerpts from Jackson County Tax Book, dated 1861, listing persons who owned thirty or more slaves and sizable amounts of acreage:

NAME	ACRES	SLAVES
James L. Baker estate	7,340	227
Thomas Barnes	1,000	77
L. W. B. Belcher	2,025	103
John B. Brown	1,450	33
Edward Bryan estate	1,650	53
Elijah Bryan	2,360	80
William E. Coe	2,500	58
William E. Coe, Sr.	2,500	63
Joseph A. Collier	1,205	34
D. C. Dawkins	900	31
M. N. Dickson	2,150	41
William H. Dudley	1,860	76
F. R. Ely estate	1,000	85
Angus Finlayson	880	33
Benjamin R. Glover	120	31
A. R. Godwin	1,440	67
George Grey	1,500	51

NAME	ACRES	SLAVES
William Hall	2,800	64
Amos Hays	3,000	48
J. P. Haywood	2,480	39
Hadley Hinson	2,200	38
James W. Johnston, agent	1,200	38
G. H. Long, agent	1,295	129
John Milton	7,326	52
John D. Myrick	5,060	197
Dr. Thomas A. Myrick	2,560	92
J. H. Pooser	1,240	37
George W. Robinson	1,757	46
J. L. Robinson	880	36
G. W. Russ	840	109
Hugh Spears estate	1,360	48
B. T. Spires	1,200	43
John Tanner, agent	870	40
Thomas M. White, agent	5,820	155
John R. Waddill	2,300	39
Thomas P. Wynns	960	52

Excerpts from Jefferson County Tax Book, dated 1860, listing persons who owned thirty or more slaves and sizable amounts of acreage:

NAME	ACRES	SLAVES
J. G. Anderson estate	2,300	135
J. P. Anderson	400	54
William Bailey, Sr.	3,700	180
Wm. J. Bailey and Father	2,140	93
Wm. J. Bailey (Lynnhurst)	6,257	95
Zakariah Bailey Estate	1,000	42
Douglas Beaty	1,133	30
B. W. Bellamy	2,840	130
Guardian E. Bellamy	1,400	70
Guardian William Bellamy	1,680	64
Behethland Bird	1,820	42
Daniel Bird	1,600	44
John Bradley	4,980	155
G. W. Call	640	36
R. B. Cole estate	1,228	39

NAME	ACRES	SLAVES
William Dilworth	2,259	42
H. R. Edwards	1,440	31
John Edwards	880	32
John W. Eppes	2,000	32
John Finlayson	3,000	170
O. H. Gadsden	1,280	62
George Galzier	1,200	34
Robert Gamble	5,760	186
R. H. Gamble	2,980	108
John A. Hallman	1,680	41
Charles Henry estate	3,400	81
L. C. Johnson	910	37
R. D. Johnson	1,600	38
Sarah A. Johnson	800	41
George Jones	4,640	108
Richard Long	1,180	31
Asa May	1,160	50
Alvin Moor	1,780	56
W. M. Moor	800	45
Catherine Murat	1,500	64
Martin Palmer estate	2,600	36
George Parkhill	1,120	36
Thomas Randall	4,080	42
Alfred Roysor	800	39
James S. Simkins	1,320	36
William C. Smith	1,200	33
William Snead	560	60
Joshua Taylor	1,040	30
Noah Teat	800	32
Richard Turnball	2,800	87
John Ulmer	680	35
David Walker, Sr.	900	52
David Walker	720	30
G. H. Ware estate	3,097	93
George Westfield	2,000	63
Edward P. Willey	1,700	108
Abner Witherington	1,084	30
John Whick	1,860	50
C. G. Young	5,000	31

Excerpts from Lafayette County Tax Book, dated 1860, listing persons who owned thirty or more slaves and sizable amounts of acreage:

NAME	ACRES	SLAVES
J. L. Cottrell	2,097	100
Fletcher McQueen	1,440	87
James W. McQueen	1,625	110

Excerpts from Leon County Tax Book, dated 1860, listing persons who owned thirty or more slaves and sizable amounts of acreage:

NAME	ACRES	SLAVES
William Bailey	2,510	73
Charles Bannerman	1,440	67
J. C. Blake	2,620	116
William Bloxham	1,400	52
B. H. Bradford	1,840	61
T. A. Bradford	1,120	65
Agent John Branch	1,560	68
W. H. Branch	1,070	57
G. M. Brown	860	54
R. C. Call	2,644	118
William A. Carr	2,100	77
A. M. Cason	640	32
John Cason	4,200	41
Benjamin Chaires, Sr.	2,600	66
C. P. Chaires	1,920	65
Green Chaires	3,360	115
Joseph Chaires	2,684	130
Joseph I. Chaires	1,600	50
T. B. Chaires	1,200	50
W. A. Chaires	1,200	48
Joseph Christie	1,420	40
F. R. Cotten	6,000	274
Administrator for estate of James Cotten	1,800	61
J. A. Craig	1,150	44
William P. Craig	1,040	38
Alex Cramartie	1,255	53
J. L. Cramartie	1,320	40

SLAVERY IN ANTEBELLUM FLORIDA

NAME	ACRES	SLAVES
John Cramartie	960	52
G. A. Croom	1,128	70
A. A. Fisher	1,144	46
R. W. Fisher	1,080	45
William Garmany	3,240	40
George Golphin	989	50
Administrator for estate of Graham	240	32
W. M. Harris	600	51
A. B. Hawkins	2,000	51
G. W. Holland	2,503	95
Aravah Hopkins	1,900	58
John Host	680	36
Calvin Johnson	820	43
D. R. A. Kenion	460	30
G. S. King, agent	2,080	68
James Kirksay	2,250	180
T. B. Lamar	1,120	41
Thomas Laversage estate	1,560	48
William Lester	3,330	136
W. F. Lloyd, agent	624	40
Mrs. M. A. Long	800	60
John S. Maxwell	880	67
William Maxwell	620	31
J. D. McCloud	1,200	36
P. B. Meginnes	1,600	70
John Millis	2,517	80
J. C. Montford	1,080	35
William S. Murray	1,220	33
William D. Papy	1,200	54
George W. Parkhill	3,580	130
William Perkins	1,568	42
William G. Ponder	5,756	99
Arthur Randolph	851	51
J. H. Randolph	130	40
W. F. Robertson	1,320	30
Robert Sheppard, agent	2,000	60
R. A. Shine	90	31
Henrietta Smith	6,184	149

NAME	ACRES	SLAVES
T. G. Thomas	640	33
P. N. Vickers	552	32
G. T. Ward	4,200	160
R. Whitaker estate	2,280	94
R. A. Whitefield	1,372	47
Amos Whitehead	2,204	58
J. J. Williams	7,000	245
R. W. Williams	800	48

Excerpts from Liberty County Tax Roll, dated 1860, listing persons who owned thirty or more slaves and sizable amounts of acreage:

NAME	ACRES	SLAVES
Mrs. Sarah S. Booth	700	40
J. C. Evans	8,000	61
John Sommers	1,460	36

Excerpts from Madison County Tax Roll, dated 1854, listing persons who owned thirty or more slaves and sizable amounts of acreage:

NAME	ACRES	SLAVES
Anthony Brantley	800	34
John S. Broome	1,030	34
W. A. Brunson	700	32
Isaac Bunting	1,655	79
Lucius Church	1,033	35
Nancy DeLaughter	2,000	42
R. S. Dozier	640	31
Archibald Fair	760	44
Hamson and Whitaker	2,280	65
Richard Harrison	1,000	145
Augustus Lenear	1,640	38
James Lipscomb	1,173	37
John Lipscomb	5,500	160
J. G. Mays	1,360	36
Richard J. Mays	1,200	92
John C. McGhee	2,960	80
I. D. McLeod	1,360	65
James McQueen	1,920	32

SLAVERY IN ANTEBELLUM FLORIDA

NAME	ACRES	SLAVES
William Moseley	820	58
G. A. Parramore	1,360	27
Reddin W. Parramore estate	3,260	85
Vous Randall	840	36
J. D. Reid	1,800	50
T. A. Smith	2,380	50
W. M. Thomas	1,000	30
W. Thompson	1,327	70
W. D. Tooke	2,800	51
A. Vann	2,000	61
B. F. Wardlow	1,720	56
Joseph Watts	2,500	50
Charles L. Wyche	1,800	45

Excerpts from a portion of Marion County Tax Book, dated 1860, listing persons who owned thirty or more slaves and sizable amounts of acreage (Unpublished Census Returns for 1860 list fifty persons owning more than thirty slaves and acreage):

NAME	ACRES	SLAVES
Thomas Barnes	540	34
I. and G. Caldwell	2,700	42
W. E. Chambers	2,000	60
Isaiah Crankfield	700	47
W. T. Eihelburger	630	38
W. H. Garlington	537	34
A. Y. Gordon	1,050	47
Ramsey Harrison	1,150	46
George W. Hardee	960	36
J. D. Hopkins	604	44
J. L. Hopkins	1,795	124
William H. Howard	1,632	70
Ellen and Mary Huggins	480	36
John M. Martin	3,000	53
Colonel J. F. Marshall	3,760	83
Samuel George Rogers	1,000	73
A. Y. Sumner	760	40
F. E. Williams	875	31
Jesse Williams	1,260	35
A. W. Yongue	1,700	44

Appendix C

A MERCHANT'S ACCOUNT, EXTENDING FROM OCTOBER 1844
THROUGH JUNE 1845, SHOWING PURCHASES MADE
TO SUPPLY ABRAM BELLAMY'S PLANTATION AND INTEREST
CHARGED FOR SERVICES RENDERED ¹

1844		
October	353 yds. cotton bagging at 19½ cts. per yd.	\$ 68.86
	905 lbs. rope at 8½ cts. per lb.	76.92
November	720 yds. cotton bagging at 19 cts. per yd.	136.80
	522 pounds rope at 8½ cts. per lb	44.37
Dec.	128 yards calico at 10 cts. per yard	12.80
	200 yds. homespun at 7½ cts. per yd.	15.00
	52 cotton hdkf. at 10 cts. each	5.20
	25 yds. checks at 12½ cts. per yd.	3.12
	25 Wool hats at 55 cts. each	13.75
	22 two gallon pots at 80 cts. each	17.60
	15-½ gallon pots at 33 cts. each	4.95
	110 iron spoons at 2 cts. each	2.20
	3 dozen knives & forks at \$1.30 cts. per dozen	4.08
	45 prs. brogans at 90 cts. per pair	40.50
	200 yds. cotton osnaburg, 9 cts. per yard	18.00
	266 yards kersey at 25 cts. per yd.	66.50
	143 yards Kentucky jeans at 25 cts. per yd.	35.75
1845		
February	326 pounds iron, 6 cts. per pound	19.56
	6 days work of Mosy Linton, Negro—black smith in shop at \$1.25 cts per day	7.50

1. Steel File 33-43, Jefferson County.

SLAVERY IN ANTEBELLUM FLORIDA

	8 turn ploughs furnished at \$3 each	24.00
June	487 yards cotton osnaburg at 8½ cts. per yd.	41.39
	1600 pounds bacon at 6 cents per pound	96.00
		<hr/> 754.85
	The above articles are charged at cost)	
)	
	prices at New York & New Orleans and I)	60.38
)	
	charge 8 PCT advance to cover all ex-)	
)	
	penses on importations)	
		<hr/> <u>\$815.23</u>

Appendix D

LIST OF PROPERTY AT CLEARVIEW AND NEWHOPE PLANTATIONS
BELONGING TO THE ESTATE OF NOAH L. THOMPSON, DATED 1855,
SHOWING INVENTORIES OF PLANTATIONS AND SLAVE VALUES ¹

4000 Bushels of Corn at Clearview	\$ 4,000.00
1700 Bu. " New Hope	1,700.00
40 Stacks of Fodder	350.00
Farming Utensils, Hoes, Ploughs, etc.	500.00
2 Sets of Blacksmiths Tools	45.00
Carpenter Tools	50.00
250 Head of Hogs (Pigs included)	500.00
40 Head of Cattle at 4 per head	160.00
5 Yoke Oxen	175.00
7 Wagons	750.00
1 Ox Cart	40.00
2 Corn Shellers	16.00
2 Dutch Fans	50.00
3 Straw Cutters	75.00
3 Grist Mills	210.00
14,000 lbs. Pork at Clearview	980.00
Household and Kitchen Furniture at Clearview	50.00
3 Gins at \$50 each	150.00
25 Pr. Wagon & Plow Gear	35.00
	\$9,866.00

1. *Inventory and Appraisements*, Book C, pp. 35, 36, Leon County.

33 Mules at \$130 each	4,290.00
6 Head Horses	500.00
2 Match Horses	250.00
1 Pr. Carriage Horses	500.00
1 Grey Poney	250.00
Tom Horse	250.00
Creole Poney	100.00
2 Fine Mares	1,000.00
1 Pr. Carriage Horses	500.00
Fine Rockaway & Harness	250.00
1 Concord Wagon	150.00
1 Buggy	150.00
Household and Kitchen Furniture at Residence	7,000.00
Lot of Goats	20.00
Crop of Cotton of 1854	15,000.00
500 Bushels of Sweet Potatoes	125.00
115 bu. of Groundpeas	115.00
72 bu. of Cowpeas	72.00
Fodder at Newhope	240.00
95 Hops at Newhope	200.00
Pork, 8,000 lbs. at Newhope	560.00
2 Waggon Saddles, Plow and Wagon Gear	38.50
Cost of House Furniture at Newhope	50.00

\$31,660.50

Mariah & 4 Children	2,500.00
Rachel & 2 Children	1,400.00
Nellie & Child	1,050.00
Tom Watson, Wife & 3 Children	2,700.00
Jack Randal, Wife & 4 Children	3,500.00
Luke, Wife and Child	2,500.00
Dublin & Wife	200.00
Lewis & Wife	1,000.00
Ben, Wife and Child	2,200.00
Eaz	900.00
Frances	900.00
Rachel Wyley & Child	1,200.00
Lizzie & Child	1,200.00
Moses	1,100.00

Isaac	600.00
Boson	700.00
Hasty	500.00
Harry	700.00
Henry	1,000.00
Siah	800.00
Abram	1,000.00
Tom Buggy	1,100.00
Luke Lily	800.00
John	1,200.00
	\$30,750.00
Joe	1,200.00
Martha	900.00
Louisa	700.00
Mariah, 2 Children	1,200.00
Amos	600.00
Milley	25.00
Nancey	600.00
Abram, Wife & 7 Children	5,500.00
Patsy & 7 Children	4,900.00
Becca & Child	1,100.00
Ephriam	500.00
Nat	1,100.00
Soloman, Wife & 2 Children	2,300.00
Miley & 3 Children	2,550.00
Ned	600.00
Peter	1,100.00
Betsy Turner & 6 Children	3,900.00
Guy, Wife & 4 Children	4,950.00
Margaret	800.00
Jefferson	1,200.00
Theodore, Wife & 5 Children	3,150.00
Lucy	900.00
Mahaly & 3 Children	1,650.00
Irvin	600.00
	<u>\$42,025.00</u>
Total Value of Estate	\$114,301.50

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- Bradford, Thomas A. Papers, 1830-71. A collection of personal and business correspondence, documents, bills, and receipts of Dr. Edward Bradford, general merchant and plantation owner. Mss., Florida State University Library, Tallahassee.
- Correspondence of the Governors, 1845-60. Mss., Florida State Library, Tallahassee.
- Correspondence of the Secretaries of State, 1845-60. Mss., Florida State Library, Tallahassee.
- Court Records of Suits Filed Against the Union Bank, 1840-48. Records showing amounts of money persons and concerns were trying to collect from the bank after 1840. Mss., Florida State Library, Tallahassee.
- Court Records of Suits Filed by the Union Bank, 1840-46. This collection shows the large number of persons whose accounts with the bank were past due.
- Finlayson, John. Papers, 1836-62. In the possession of Edwin H. Finlayson at Ashville, Florida. Among them are receipts, showing amounts paid for Negro slaves at various times and how they were brought to Florida from Georgia, Maryland, and Virginia.
- Gatlin, Sarah A. Dower Assignment Letters, 1842-45. Letters showing the size of Alfred Gatlin's estate and his financial condition at the time of his death (he was heavily indebted to the Union Bank). Mss., Florida State Library, Tallahassee.

- Haas, Maria. Letter to Governor James E. Broome to Market French Cutlery in Florida, 1854. Ms., Secretary of State's Office, Tallahassee.
- Lafayette, Marquis de. Letter, June 6, 1831. Shows an attempt to introduce white labor in Florida. Ms., Secretary of State's Office, Tallahassee.
- Laudaman and Sheffield Store Account Book, 1829. Shows transactions made with cotton, tobacco, and corn. Ms., Florida State Library, Tallahassee.
- Letters to the Governors, 1846-60. A miscellaneous collection pertaining to land. Mss., Secretary of State's Office, Tallahassee.
- Letters and Petitions, 1850-54. Papers pertaining to the establishment of a state seminary at Tallahassee. They show the sectional feeling involved throughout the state in the choice of location for the seminary. Ms., Secretary of State's Office, Tallahassee.
- Messages from the Governors to the General Assembly, 1850-59. Mss., Secretary of State's Office, Tallahassee.
- Miscellaneous Collection of Letters, Store Account Books, Wills, and Other Legal Papers, 1830-45. Mss., Florida State Library, Tallahassee.
- Miscellaneous Letters and Petitions, 1830-60. These papers, referring to immorality and lawlessness, consist chiefly of letters to the governors and petitions to the General Assembly, showing social conditions as they existed in Florida. Mss., Secretary of State's Office, Tallahassee.
- Norwood, Olin. Collection. Contains material (some of which is valuable) pertaining to the early history of Hamilton County; it is in the possession of the late Olin Norwood's family at Jasper, Florida.
- Nuttall, William B. Papers, 1840-56. Include a complete record of Nuttall's estate from 1840 to 1844, showing amounts of cotton turned over to the Union Bank to pay debt and also plantation records for the period. Includes legal documents dated 1844 and 1856 indicating that the estate was heavily indebted. The papers are in the possession of the widow of Carlton Smith at Madison, Florida.
- Oliphant, William. Will, October 13, 1827. An unusual will in that it provides money to cover costs of transportation for certain Negro slaves to a free state of their choice. Ms., Florida State Library, Tallahassee.
- Perrine, Henry. Memorial. December 17, 1831. Perrine's letter refers to introduction of hemp and other valuable plants into Florida. Ms., Secretary of State's Office, Tallahassee.
- Petitions to the General Assembly, 1846-55. Petitions concerned with internal improvements throughout the state. Mss., Secretary of State's Office, Tallahassee.
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- Tax Books for Alachua, Gadsden, Hamilton, Jackson, Jefferson, Leon, Madison, and Marion Counties, 1830-60. Mss., Florida State Library, Tallahassee.
- Tax Books for Lafayette and Liberty Counties, 1856-60. Mss., Florida State Library, Tallahassee.
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- Whitehead, James. Estate Merchandise Invoice, January 19, 1848. Contains information about goods shipped to Leon County through St. Marks from New York. Ms., Florida State Library, Tallahassee.
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Index

- Abolitionists, 46, 78
Absentee ownership, 58, 102
Adams, John Quincy, 22
Adamson, C. C., 124
African slave trade. *See* Slave trade
Agricultural reform: leaders in movement, 177-78; Florida participants in, 178; Florida legislature in support of, 179; movement to establish direct trade with Europe, 180-81; scientific farming, 187, 194
Alachua County, 10, 11, 90, 124, 149
Alapaha River, 14, 18, 20, 149
Allen, Richard, 129
American Agriculturist, The, 12
American Cotton Planter, The, 178
American Farmer, The, 24, 177
Anderson, John G., 186
Anderson, Josephine, former slave interviewed, 196-200
Apalachicola, 45, 104, 107, 184; as cotton outlet, 161, 166-70
Apalachicola Gazette, 103
Apalachicola River, 10, 12, 14, 150, 161
Appalachian foothills, 11
Aptheker, Herbert, on slave revolts, 171
Arator, 177
Ashley, William R., 48
Ashville, 140
Aucilla River, 14
Bahama Islands, 154; slaves escape to, 106
Bailey, "General" William, 123, 124, 185-87; financial activity, 140, 142; as agent for New Orleans factor, 167; on southern economic independence, 183-84
Bailey, William J., 85, 95, 123, 124, 139, 142, 186, 187, 189; plantation home, 143, 166
Baker, James L. G., 124
Baker, Dr. John B., 77
Baltimore, 177, 181
Bancroft, Frederic, on slave trade, 171
Banks, 122, 125, 126, 129, 132, 133, 142, 185
Barrow, David, 123
Bartram, William, description of Middle Florida, 10
Bassett, John Spencer, on slavery, 171
Beard, John, 186
Beard and Denham, firm of, 167
Bell, Daniel, 20, 149, 168
Bellamy, Abraham, 97, 185; account with New York factor, 164-65
Bellamy, Alexander A., 75
Bellamy, Edward C., 75
Bellamy, Emmala, 95, 187, 189
Bellamy, John, 165, 185-86; construction of first federal highway, 21, 22
Bellamy, Theodosia, 164, 186

- Bellamy, Victoria, 164
 Bellamy, William, 34, 95, 123, 124, 157, 187; slave values, 39
 Bellville, 149
 Benjamin, Judah P., 130
 Berry, Robert, 127
 Betton, Turbot, 133, 159
 Biddle, Mary Minus, former slave interviewed, 200-205
 Bird, Benjamin, firm of, 167
 Black Belt in Florida, 10
 Bond, Dr. John S., 97
 Bondage. *See* Slavery
 Braden, Hector, 131
 Braden, Joseph, 130
 Braden's "castle," 132
 Bradenton, 132
 Bradford, Edward, 55, 72, 74, 82, 83, 89, 95; agricultural reform, 178, 181
 Branch, Eliza, 140
 Branch, Franklin, 35
 Branch, Governor John, 140; agricultural reform, 178, 187
 Branch, William H., 90
 Brinson, Martha Bailey, 140
 Broome, Governor James E., 167-68
 Broome, John F., 168
 Brown, Governor Thomas, 106, 124, 168, 181
 Brown, William Wells, 32
 Bryan, Elijah, 124
 Bunting, Isaac, 124, 157
 Burgess, William, husband of Mary Ann Chaires, 126
 Burkett, Josiah B., 76
 Burroughs, Dr. B. B., 98
 Butler, Robert, 159
 Bythewood, Joseph F., 186

 Cabell, Edward C., 123, 124, 181, 186
 Cairnes, J. E., British economist and abolition writer, 172-73
 Calhoun, John C., 148
 Call, George W., 49
 Call, Richard K., 21, 95, 124; agricultural reform, 178
 Camak, James, agricultural reform, 178
 Campbell, Patience, former slave interviewed, 205-6
 Carolinas, 11, 17
 Cartwright, Dr. Samuel W., 80, 81
 Castelnau, Francis de, 18
 Cedar Key, 161
 Cedars Plantation, 140
 Central Bank of Florida, 126
 Central Male College, 189
 Chaires, Benjamin: formation of Tallahassee Railroad Company, 21, 103; financial activity, 124-27; Verdura, Chaires' mansion, 135, 136
 Chaires, Benjamin, Jr., 124; agricultural reform, 178
 Chaires, Furman, 124
 Chaires, Green, 21, 112, 124, 185
 Chaires, Joseph, 103, 124, 127, 185
 Chaires, Martha, wife of Robert Gamble, 131
 Chaires, Tom Peter, 185
 Chaletah Plantation, 148
 Chandler, Mary, 114, 116
 Chandler, Nancy, slave, 114, 116
 Charleston, 28, 167-68, 181
 Chattahoochee River, 14
 Chemonie Plantation, 31, 59, 60, 73, 74, 86, 87
 Christy, David, 173
 Church, Lucius, 124
 Churches: slave membership in, 95, 96; Methodist Episcopal, 95, 96, 132, 187, 189; Bethel Primitive Baptist, 96; St. John's Episcopal, 114; Roman Catholic, 189; Missionary and Primitive Baptist, 189
 Clark, Harry S., 47
 Clark and Ferris, firm of, 35
 Clay, Cassius M., 172
 Clayton, Florida, former slave, 206-7
 Clordey, Thomas, 106
 Clothing, slaves', 82-87, 139-40, 196, 201-2
 Cloud, Noah B., agricultural reform, 177-78
 Coffee Road, southwest Georgia, 20
 Cofield, John Calvin, 131
 Cohabitation. *See* Miscegenation
 Collins, John B., 166
 Columbia County, 11, 15
 Commercial conventions, 181-83
 Commission merchant and factor: system of financing, 159-70; growth after 1837, 167; account sheet showing commission charged, 223-24
 Cooper, James Gignilliat, 75

- Cotten, Fred R., 79, 90, 93, 124, 136
 Cotten, John W., 58; provision under will, 136; cotton sold from estate, 162-63
 Cotton: expansion of, 10, 11; varieties of, 15, 151-52, 153-54, 187; profits from, 137, 151-52, 176; crop hazards, 155; false packing of, 156; marketing of, 157-59, 160-70; value of, in world market, 158; weighers, 168; cotton gin, 186-87
 —production, 137, 142, 146, 149, 150, 151, 152, 153, 154, 157, 158, 161, 162, 163, 164, 166, 169
 Craig, William P., 130
 Craig and Daffin, firm of, 166
 Craven, Avery O., on slavery, 171
 Creoles, 119, 120
 Croom, Hardy Bryan: slaves hired from estate of, 49; Florida botanist, owner of Goodwood plantation, 153-54; Sea Island cotton produced, 154
 Cuba, 181
- Dancing, among slaves, 94, 210
 Davis, J. F., firm of, 166
 Davis, Robert McGeorge, 131
 De Bow, J. D. B.: average yield of seed cotton per acre, 153; proslavery writer, 173; commercial independence, 181-82
 Degler, Carl N., on treatment of slaves in Brazil and Old South, 6, 8
 Delaughter, Nancy, 47
 Denham and Palmer, firm of, 167
 Dew, Thomas R., 31
 Diseases: among slaves, 99; treatment of, 100
 Doby, James M., 190
 Dorsey, Douglas, former slave interviewed, 207-11
 Douglass, Frederick, 78
 Dozier, John, 112
 Drapetomania, alleged Negro disease, 104
 Dudley, William H., 124
 Dulany, Elizabeth, 40
 Dupont, Charles H., 124
 Duval, Samuel, 21, 129
 Duval, William P., 24, 114
 Duval County, 107, 113
- East Florida Seminary, 189
 Edmonds, Julia F., 50
 Education. *See* Schools
 El Destino Plantation, 31, 57, 59, 60, 69, 179
 Elkins, Stanley M., on treatment of slaves in Latin America and Old South, 5, 6
 Ely, F. R., 124; firm of, 167
 Emancipation, 206, 207, 210, 211, 212
 Eno, Amanda A., 190
 Eno, Julia and Ada, 190
 Eppes, Susan Bradford, 79, 82, 92
 Eppes, T. J., 168
Essay on Calcareous Mamures, 177
 Evans, John, overseer, 59, 60, 66, 73
 Executors for estates: sale of slaves by, 40, 48, 76; hiring out of slaves by, 48, 49, 75, 76, 77
- Factor. *See* Commission merchant
 Families. *See* Slaves
Farmers' Register, The, 58
 Fauntleroy, George, 126
 Federal highway, Pensacola to St. Augustine, 21
 Field hands. *See* Slave labor
 Fillyaw, Oscar, 98, 150, 156, 161
 Fillyaw, Owen, 150
 Financing, developed by Florida planters in absence of banks, 185-86
 Finlayson, Edwin H., 140
 Finlayson, John, 29, 47, 65, 87, 91, 116, 118, 123, 144, 145, 179; size and value of estate, 146-47
 Fisher, A. A., 104
 Fletcher Institute, 189
 Flint River, 14
 Florida: as frontier development, 4, 5, 10; under Spanish control, 9; under British control, 10; acquisition of, by United States, 10; settlement and rate of growth, 27; industrial development, 184
 Florida Peninsula, 129
 Florida Railroad, Fernandina to Cedar Key, 21
 Food: allotment to slaves, 139; production, 139
 Foreign slave trade. *See* Slave trade
 Foremen, slave, 56, 71
 Forest Hills Plantation, 137

- Fort George Island, 32-33, 113
 Franklin, John Hope, on slavery, 171
 Free labor, slaveholders' fear of, 50
 Free Negroes, 106, 107, 110, 112-21;
 number of, 111; legal restrictions
 on, 112, 113, 114, 115
 Friesby, Thomas, 106
- Gadsden, James, 123; firm of, 168
 Gadsden County, 11, 14, 39, 40, 49,
 51, 124, 139, 149, 150, 176
 Gamble, John and Letitia, 132
 Gamble, John G., 124, 127, 128; fi-
 nancial activity, 129; on southern
 economic independence, 183
 Gamble, Robert, 87, 89, 127, 130, 131,
 132
 Gamble, Robert H., 38, 67, 87
 Gantling, Clayborn, former slave, 78
 Garnett, James M., agricultural re-
 form, 177
 Gaskin, Thomas, overseer, 102-3
 Gates, Josiah, 130
 Gatlin, Alfred, 133, 157
 Genovese, Eugene D., on economics
 of slavery, 171
 Georgia, 11, 17, 18, 29, 169
 Georgia Piedmont, 10
 Gibson, James, 124, 139
 Glendower Plantation, 140, 144, 145,
 179
 Goodbread, Adam S., 124
 Goodwood Plantation, 153
 Gorrie, John, invention of machine
 for making ice, 184
 Gramling, Adam, 23
 Gray, Catherine Dangerfield Willis,
 94
 Gray, Lewis C., on economics of
 slavery, 171, 175
 Gulf of Mexico, 14, 20, 45
- Haile, Amelia, 124
 Haile, Edward, 90, 124
 Haile, Thomas, 124
 Hairston, Samuel, 32
 Halifax River, 129
 Hamilton County, 11, 15, 18, 20, 37,
 39, 49, 87, 98, 124, 149
 Hamlen, Nathaniel, New Orleans fac-
 tor, 167
 Hammock, George, overseer, 65, 66
 "Hants," in slave folklore, 197-200
- Harris, J. R., firm of, 161, 167
 Harris and Tucker, firm of, 186
 Harrison, Reuben L., 168
 Harrison, Richard, 124, 139, 187; sale
 of plantation and slaves, 38; salary
 of overseer, 64; size and value of
 estate, 147
 Hawthorn formation, 12, 143
 Hayward, Thomas, 181
 Heagler, Benjamin J., 76
 Helper, Hinton R., on economics of
 slavery, 172
 Hernando County, 83-84
 Hillsborough County, 11, 34, 48
 Hines, Bryan, 106
 Hiring. *See* Slave hiring
 Hoe hands. *See* Slave labor
 Holland, Jack, 23
 Hopkins, James T., 124
 Horseshoe Plantation, 55
 Housing. *See* Slaves
 Howard, C. W., 54
 Howard, George W., 90
 Howard, Warren S., on importation
 of slaves from Africa, 45
 Hughes, William H., 168
 Hunter, Thomas, 50
- Industrial development, 183-84
 Infant mortality, among slaves, 99
- Jackson, Andrew, 23
 Jackson County, 10, 11, 14, 34, 69, 87,
 90, 124, 149, 167
 Jacksonville, 105, 113
 Jai, Anna Madgigene, wife of Zeph-
 aniah Kingsley, 33
 Jasper County, 149, 168
 Jefferson Academy, 189
 Jefferson County, 11, 14, 38, 39, 49,
 57, 59, 84, 123, 139, 140, 143, 147,
 149, 157, 179
 Jennings, 20
 Jones, George Noble, 31, 59, 60, 84,
 95, 123, 179
 Jones, Jethro W., agricultural re-
 form, 178
- Keith, Dr. W. G., 105
 Kersey, 82, 139
 Key West, 106, 119, 121
 Kilcrease, William E., 83, 86, 124;
 slave values, 35; hire of slave, 50;

- value of estate, 150-52; account with commission merchant, 161-62
 Kingsley, George, free Negro, 113
 Kingsley, Zephaniah, slave trader, 32, 33, 113

 Lafayette, Marquis de: land grant, 23, 24, 27; free white laborers, 24
 Lake Iamonia, 12, 64
 Lake Jackson, 12, 125, 132
 Lake Lafayette, 12
 Land speculation, 22, 23, 27
 Lanier, James, firm of, 166
 Laudaman and Sheffield, firm of, 157, 159-60
 Lea, A. E., 163-64
 Lee, Daniel, agricultural reform, 177
 Leon County, 11, 38, 39, 41, 49, 55, 56, 82, 90, 102, 124, 125, 131, 136, 137, 139, 147, 149, 150, 156, 157, 162
 Lester, William, 102
 Lewis, Romeo, 129
 Lewis State Bank, 142
 Lindsey, 85
 Lipscomb, John, 47, 48, 124; size and value of estate, 147-48
 Livingston's Landing, 14
 Lloyd, William F., 187
 Long, Ellen Call, 20, 79, 83, 92, 183
 Lyndhurst Plantation, 139, 143

 McConochie and Donnell, firm of, 131
 McElvey, Noah, 23
 McGehee, John C., 124, 149, 187; on states' rights and southern economic independence, 148
 McLeod, James, 48
 Macrae, Farquhar, 23, 58, 59
 Madison, 14, 148, 161, 168
 Madison County, 11, 18, 37, 38, 39, 47, 49, 65, 87, 89, 106, 124, 139, 140, 147, 148, 149, 157, 165, 176
 Madison Female Seminary, 189
 Magnolia, 166-67
 Manatee County, 130, 132, 139
 Manatee River sugar plantations, 11, 87, 130, 131, 132
 Manley, Hiram, 125
 Manor, compared to Old South plantation, 1, 2
 Manufacturing, 183-84
 Manumission: comparison in Old South and Brazil, 6, 7; provision under wills, 33, 47
 Marianna, 40, 161, 167
 Marion, Nathaniel P., 124
 Marion County, 10, 11, 105, 124, 132, 149
 Marriages, slave, 203-4
 Mays, Richard J., 47, 124, 140
 Mays, Sumter, 140, 143
 Mays, Virginia, 140, 143
 Meigs, John B., 112
 Mercer, John, 34
 Miccosukie, 38
 Middle Florida, 161, 168, 170; geographical description of, 10-17; desirability for cotton culture, 12, 15, 16, 17; migration to, 17, 122-23
 Midwife, 91
 Miscegenation, between owner and female slaves, 32-33, 47, 60, 93, 206-7, 208-9
 Mississippi, 11
 Monette, Dr. J. W., 61
 Monroe, William, 124
 Montgomery, 182
 Monticello, 20, 142, 161, 164, 166, 167, 189
 Monticello Cotton Mill, 184
 Moore, G. W., 38
 Moore, Kidder Meade, 69, 73, 84
 Moseley, William D., 23; agricultural reform, 112
 Moxley, D. N., overseer, 60
 Mulattoes, 75, 93, 103, 107. *See also* Free Negroes
 Murat, Achille, 4, 54, 81, 89, 93, 94, 183
 Murder, of whites by slaves, 104-5
 Muse, Monroe, firm of, 162
 Music, among slaves, 94
 Myrick, Ben, slave, 74
 Myrick, John D., 40, 124

 Nassau County, 75
 Negroes. *See* Free Negroes
 Negro stealers. *See* Slave catchers
 Nesbitt, Thomas, 137
 New Orleans, 28, 29, 45, 93, 167, 178, 181, 182, 187
 Newport, 167-68
 New Smyrna, 45
 Nicks, James R., 64
 Noyes, A. B., 167

- Nuttall, Braden, Craig, firm of, 24
 Nuttall, John, 57
 Nuttall, William B., overseer, 57
- Ochlockonee River, 14, 21, 150
 Oliphant, William, 47
 Olmsted, Frederick Law: on punishment of runaway slave, 62; on labor of slaves, 70, 71; on slave clothing, 82; on profitability with slave labor, 173
 Orange County, 68, 113
 Orange Mill Company, slave hiring, 49, 176
 Otis, Harrison Gray, 110
 Overseers, 3, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66; on average plantations, 53; on large plantations, 54, 55; duties of, 57, 58; shortcomings of, 57-60; cruelty of, 59, 60, 61, 62, 102-3; cohabitation with female slaves, 60; salaries of, 64
 Owens, Reverend J. B., 90, 124
 Owens, Colonel S. H., 124
 Owens, W. A., 124
- Palmer, Martin, 164
 Panic of 1837, 132, 167
 Panton and Leslie, firm of, 113
 Parker, Lawrence, descendant of slave of John Finlayson, 117, 118
 Parkhill, George W., 186
 Parkhill, John, 21
 Parkhill, Martha Ann, 125
 Parkhill, Samuel, 21, 124, 125, 126, 127
 Parramore, Reddin W., 14, 65, 124, 186; slave values, 39; as planter and commission merchant, 165
 Patterson, Thomas, 107
 Peeler, James, 187
 Pensacola, 16, 21, 107, 119-21
Pensacola Gazette, 119
 Pensacola and Georgia Railroad, 74, 142, 186; Quincy to Jacksonville, 21
 Perkins, Thomas J., firm of, 167
 Perry, Madison S., 107, 168
 Pettus, I. G., firm of, 186
 Pettus, Dr. John G., 97
 Phillips, Ulrich B., on economics of slavery, 171, 174-75
 Pierce, William, 104
 Pine Hill Plantation, 55, 73-74
 Pioneer Line of Packets, 168
- Plantations: definition, 1-4; development of with slave labor, 10, 18; concentrations of, 10-11, 13; distribution and size of, 27, 123, 124, 129, 130, 131, 132; self-sufficiency of, 54, 138-42; small units, 57, 58; crop production on, 139; locations, 141; supplies for, 159-62, 165-66, 225-26; inventories of slave and other property values, 225-27
 Planters: classes of, 3, 4; migration to Florida, 5; interest in welfare of slaves, 90; representative groups in plantation belt, 123, 124; financing economy in absence of banking system, 164, 185-86. *See also* Slaveholders
 Pleasant Grove Plantation, 132
Plow, Loom, and Anvil, The, 178
 Plow hands. *See* Slave labor
 Ponder, James, 85
 Poor whites, 183-84
 Population, Florida, 17, 18, 27
 Porter, William G., 166
 Post and Mel, firm of, 167
 Postell, William D., on health of slaves, 171
 Powell, Jeremiah, 124, 132
 Pre-emptors, 22
 Proctor, Antonio, free Negro, 113, 114
 Proctor, Ernest, grandson of slave, 115, 116, 118
 Proctor, George, free Negro, 114, 116; children of, 116, 118
 Proctor, John, free Negro, 113, 116
 Putnam, J. G., 168
- Quadroons, 107
 Quarters, slave. *See* Slaves
 Quincy, 20, 83, 161, 166, 167, 189
 Quincy Male and Female Academy, 190
- Railroads, 21, 40; Florida Railroad, 21; Pensacola and Georgia Railroad, 21; Tallahassee Railroad, 21; employment of slaves on, 50, 51
 Randolph, John S., 34
 Rawls, Richard D., 77
 Reed, Ben, free Negro, 112
 Reid, Jeremiah D., 59, 124
 Reid, Leigh, 21

- Reid, Sam, 21, 166
- Religion: to control slaves, 210; importance to planters, 187, 189
- Rice production, 15, 139
- Richmond, 28, 41, 181
- Robinson, Jacob, 34, 91
- Robinson, Solon: description of plantation belt, 12; travel to Middle Florida, 20, 56; report on condition of slaves, 81; description of planter class, 123, 191; profitability of slavery, 173-74
- Roma, Isabella, free Negro, 119
- Ross, Francis J., 37; hiring out of slaves, 50; cohabitation, 93; account with commission merchant, 149-50, 165-66
- Ruffin, Edmund, agricultural reform, 177
- Rugan, Henry, 107
- Runaway slaves. *See* Slaves
- Russ family, 124
- St. Augustine, 16, 21, 107, 109
- St. Johns County, 113
- St. Johns River, 32, 105
- St. Joseph, 104, 166
- St. Joseph's Bay, 46
- St. Marks, seaport for Middle Florida and lower Georgia, 20, 21, 157, 161, 162, 167, 169
- St. Vincents Island, 104
- Savannah, 167-68, 181
- Scarborough, William K., on overseers, 171
- Schools: organized and supported by Methodist Episcopal Church, 189-90; movement to educate southern youth in the South, 190; State Seminary organized at Tallahassee, 191
- Scott, Colonel George W., 116
- Sea Islands, 154
- Seegar, I. T., 83
- Seminole Wars: sugar plantations destroyed by, 11, 129-30; menace of Indians, 16
- Shackles, 62
- Sheffield, D. J. & J. W., firm of, 166
- Shepard, John L., 21, 124, 132, 133; agricultural reform, 178
- Simkins, Smith, 185
- Skinner, John L., 24; agricultural reform, 177-78
- Slave "breeding," 30, 31, 32, 33, 205, 212
- Slave catchers, 105, 204, 207, 208
- Slave codes, laws to restrict, 101-10
- Slave customs: cooking, 201; amusements, 202; food, 202, 205. *See also* *Slave Narratives*, 195-212
- Slave hiring: hiring own time, 6, 51, 55, 75, 76, 109, 175-76; by owners or estates, 48-52, 74-77; hardships endured, 77
- Slaveholders: advantages of investments in slaves, 8; farmers, owning few slaves, 56, 57; proportion, 123; average holdings, 123-33; profits, 136-52; ownership in acreage and slaves, by counties, 213-22
- Slave labor: in construction work, 40; skilled laborers, 55-56; subterfuges to evade work, 61, 62; on cotton plantations, 66, 67; on sugar plantations, 67, 68; daily routine of labor, 69-72
- Slave Narratives*, 78, 195-212
- Slave patrols, 204, 210
- Slave population, 25-26; concentration, 10, 11; increase, 29
- Slavery: profitability, 171-76, 191, 194; as business enterprise, 176; influence on education, 191; expansion, 191, 194
- Slaves: importation from Africa, 2; separation of families, 6, 7, 77, 79, 116, 118, 209; variation in treatment of North and South America, 8; runaways, 8, 62-64, 77, 103, 105, 106, 204; introduction into Florida, 9; fiddler, 30, 94, 210; caste system, 46; slaveholders' respect, 47-48; in cities, 52; classes, 54-71; punishment, 60-61, 79, 103-4, 210, 212; cruelty to, 61, 62, 84, 202, 205, 208-9, 210, 212; work requirements, 72; holidays, 73-74; treatment, 78-100; clothing, 82-87, 139-40, 196, 201-2; housing, 88-91; care of pregnant and suckling, 91-93; religious instruction of, 94-96, 202, 210-11; health and medical treatment, 96-100; mortality rate, 99; illnesses, 99-100; laws to restrict, 101-10; insurrection, 102, 108; brutality, 104-5; food, 139

- Slave stealers, 105. *See also* Slave catchers
- Slave trade, 6, 7, 28-52; demand for slaves, 30; grooming slaves for market, 37; classifications determining prices of slaves, 39; supplying and purchasing slaves, 41; increase in prices of slaves, 43; illegal importation of slaves, 44-46; proposals to re-open African trade, 182, 207-8
- Slave traders, 32-33, 45, 79, 205, 207-8, 212; description, 28-30; slave coffles, 29, 30
- Slave values, 27, 29, 34, 35, 37, 39, 41, 43, 113, 184-85, 226-27
- Smallwood, Gibson, and Harris, firm of, 161
- Smith, A. L., firm of, 162
- Smith, Burney, 106
- Snelling, John J., 167
- Soil exhaustion, 176
- South Carolina, 169
- South Carolina Railroad, 40
- Southern Cultivator, The*, 54, 178
- Southern Direct Trade Association, 182
- Southern economic independence, 180-84
- Southern Rights Manufacturing Company, 142
- Spalding, Thomas, 154
- Sparkman, Simeon L., 34
- Spencer, John B., firm of, 149-50, 165-66
- Spencer, R. M., 167
- Spring Garden Plantation, 68
- Sproull, J. C., firm of, 40
- Stallings, William W., 76
- Stampp, Kenneth M., on profitability of slavery, 171, 175-76
- Stapler, John R., 124
- Starke, Major, 68
- State Bank of Florida, 142, 185
- Stellapicker, 148
- Steward, A. T., firm of, 183
- Stewart, N. A., 190
- Stringfellow, W. H., 124
- Sugar plantations, 11, 129-32
- Sugar production, 67, 68, 130, 131, 132
- Suwannee County, 10, 15
- Suwannee River, 10, 12, 14, 15, 18, 149
- Sydnor, Charles S., on profitability of slavery, 171, 174
- Tallahassee, 17, 20, 55, 135, 157, 161, 162, 166, 167, 169, 170
- Tallahassee Hills: location, 11; geologic formation, 12. *See also* Middle Florida
- Tallahassee Railroad Company, 132, 142; Tallahassee to St. Marks, 21
- Tampico, Mexico, 119-20
- Tannenbaum, Frank, on treatment of slaves in Latin America and Old South, 5, 6
- Tan Yard Creek, 148
- Tatnall, Josiah, 154
- Taylor, John, agricultural reform, 177
- Taylor, Orville W., on profitability of slavery, 175
- Taylor and Ritch, firm of, 164-65
- Texas, 43
- Thomas, Jonathan, 40
- Thomas, Joseph, 124
- Thomas, L. B., firm of, 165
- Thomas, Robert, 124
- Thompson, Noah L., agricultural reform, 178
- Tobacco production, 139
- Tredegar Iron Company, 184
- Triangular trade route, 33
- Tunno, William M., firm of, 168
- Turnbull, Nicholas, 154
- Turner, Frederick Jackson, frontier thesis, 5, 89
- Turner, Dr. John M., 97
- Turner, Nat, 102
- Tyler, John, 23
- Union Bank, 122, 125, 126, 129, 132, 133, 185
- Van Buren, Martin, 23
- Verdura Plantation, 134-36
- Virginia, 11, 17, 29, 30, 31
- Wade, Richard C., on slavery in cities, 171
- Walker, David, 110, 111
- Walker, Robert J., 23
- Walters and Walker, firm of, 168
- Walton County, 57, 58
- Wanderly, Joao Mauricio, Brazilian emancipation leader, 7
- Ward, Virginia, wife of Joseph Braden, 131

- Watts, Joseph B., 106
Waukeenanah, 38
Whatley, Jesse W., overseer, 64, 65
Whitaker, John, 124
White, Thomas M., 75
Whitehead, Charles E., 4, 56
Whitehead, James, 31, 98, 136, 162;
 provisions of will, 137
Whitehead, John B., 84, 85, 136, 157;
 financial activity, 137; provisions of
 will, 137-38
White Springs, 14, 18, 161, 165, 166
Whitfield, George, agricultural re-
 form, 178
Whitner, Benjamin F., 16, 31, 124,
 187
Widgeon, Isaac, firm of, 91
Williams, David R., 90, 124
Williams, Joseph J., 124
Williams, Robert W., 24, 27, 166,
 186-87
Willis, Jesse, 159
Wilson, D. C., firm of, 167
Withlacoochee River, 12, 14, 87, 149
Woodman, Harold D., on profitabil-
 ity of slavery, 172
Woodpecker Trailer, 18
Wyatt, George H., 130
Wyatt, William, 105
Yetman, Norman R., on selections
 from *Slave Narratives*, 196

